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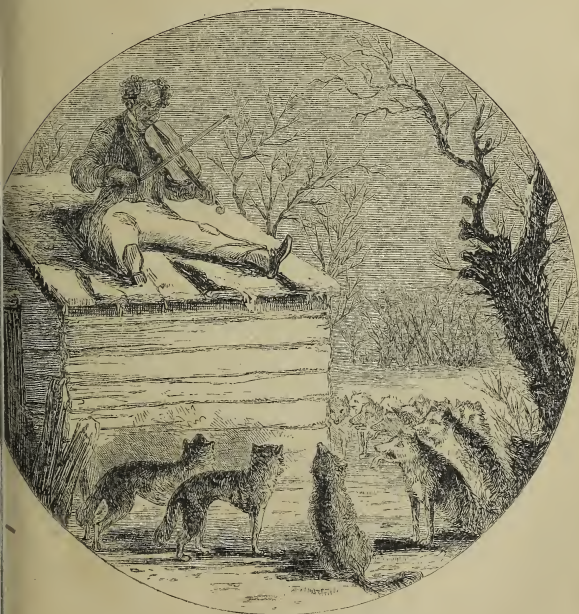
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ROMANCE
OF
FOREST & PRAIRIE LIFE.



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THE ROMANCE
OF
FOREST AND PRAIRIE LIFE:
NARRATIVES OF
PERILOUS ADVENTURES & WILD HUNTING
SCENES.



THE DARKIE FIDDLER AND THE WOLVES

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THE ROMANCE OF FOREST AND PRAIRIE LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

AUDUBON—THE HUNTER-NATURALIST.

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WELL do I remember the hold the name of Audubon took upon my young imagination when I heard the fragmented rumour from afar, that there was a strange man abroad, who lived in the wilderness with only his dog and gun, and did nothing day by day but follow up the birds; watching every thing they might do; keeping in sight of them all the time, wherever they went, while light lasted; then sleeping beneath the tree where they perched, to be up and follow them again with the dawn, until he knew every habit and way that belonged to them. That when he was satisfied, he would shoot them in some manner so as not to tear their plumage, and

then sitting down on the mossy roots of an oak, and with nobody to criticise him but his wise-looking dog, and the squirrel that stamped and scolded at him from the limbs above, would draw such marvellous pictures of birds as the world never saw before!

Oh! what a happy, happy being that strange man must be, I used to think; and what a strong and brave one, too, to sleep out among the panthers and wild cats, where the Indian whoop was heard—trusting only to his single arm and his faithful dog. I loved to speculate about that dog. He must be larger than my dog "Milo," I thought, and just about as gentle and true, but a *little* more knowing. How I envied him the happiness of such a master and such a life!

As for the master, what magical conjurations of a charmed fancy I loved to associate with him! He must be noble and good, and wear such lofty calmness upon his brow. I had an idea of physical perfection, and below it could not bear to conceive that so heroic a philosopher could fall.

What a martyr-spirit his must be; and what a daring enthusiasm leads him on through tangled swamps, where the cougar yelled, alligators roared, and hideous serpents parted, with their wavy spotted lengths, the green scum of stagnant pools; up difficult mountains, where the rattle-snake sprung its deadly alarum amidst the mossy fissures of the crumbling stones, and the eagle whetted its hooked beak upon the crag-points; or beneath the profound shadows of primeval forests, where the few sunbeams that straggled through at noon-day looked like gold dust scattered over the black earth—down the destructive flood of mighty rivers, or beside crystal lakes set in a columnar rim of giant cypresses; on the sky-bounded ocean-heaved prairies, or where the green and glinting icebergs thundered clashingly against

the hoar cliffs “of fretted Labrador,” or the “tropic gulf” hurled at the low “Keys” its foaming mountains—through, amidst, and over all, his dauntless spirit was passing, led always by the winnowing sound of wings.

What a poetical enchantment there was to me in such a life! What sights of awe and of beauty he must see! What images of touching truth—of odd, peculiar humours, he must have stored! And that magical power he was said to possess,—to tame in colours the very wave upon the leap, and the arrowy albatross upon the plunge into its beaded crest!

It seemed to me too much bliss and too many gifts for a single mortal to enjoy! I felt, not envious; but a deep emulation was stirred within me. I vowed, in my inmost heart, that I would first *see* all those things for myself, with my own eyes; where, and *as* he had seen them—out upon the broad face of the extended world—and then I could look upon his work and know, with an appreciative knowledge, whether he had wrought these miracles or not.

This resolve at once gave tone to my after-life. Many a tie was rent, and much agony endured by my friends, when I became a wanderer through wild and distant regions. The uttermost arms of the tremendous seaward floods of America saw me amongst their springs. The salt and tumbling Gulf tossed me upon its southern shores, and broad savannahs swelled in my westward course into undulating plains; and they yet rose, across their wearisome breadth, into tall, rounded hills, that grew apace, with crags upon their heads, until heap upon heap, far glinting through the clouds, the pinnaled sharp rocks climbed upwards, and the vast forest of crags spread its white bloomy tops among the stars.

My restless step was everywhere; my eager eyes saw all that our great continent could show. The

grizzly bear and the tropic bird were equally known to me. The savage trooper and the Mexican slave had been familiars, as well as the fierce bandit and the stern, simple-hearted hunter. Years of my earlier manhood passed in these erratic wanderings. I had grown familiar with all wild, grotesque, and lonely creatures that populate those infinite solitudes of nature, "that own not man's dominion." The vision and the passions of my boyhood still haunted me, and the rustling of free wings by my ear yet awakened all pleasant images.

Now, I felt that I had a right to know and see, face to face, that remarkable man whose deeds and life had so much occupied my imagination—who had so made a living reality out of what had been to me the poetry of life—ay, a poetry which had proved with me stronger

"Than stipulations, duties, reverences,"

and driven me far and wide, an April shadow chased before the fitful wind!

Should I ever see him? The eager questioning lived about my heart whenever I heard his name. I returned home, "the prodigal son," my spirit much tamed and chastened; yet the old leaven fermenting deep beneath the calmer surface.

My restless steps had not long been still. I became again a traveller.

Our boat landed one morning about daybreak at Pittsburg,—that singular city, that looks as if it had been built over the very gates of Acheron. Soon as I made my appearance in the raw, foggy air, upon the wharf, early as it was, I was surrounded by scores of "strikers," and agents of the different hotels and transportation lines.

Amidst the yells and deafening clamours of contending claims on every side, I permitted myself to be forced

bodily into a coach, and hurried off, bag and baggage, for—the word of the Ducky “Striker” being accepted—“the most splendiferous hotel in the city!” As it happened to be the one I knew, and had selected beforehand, I was content to take his definition of its superlative excellence.

Before I reached my destination, the coach was hailed from a street corner, and a fellow, muffled in a pilot cloth, sprang in and took a seat beside me. To my no little astonishment, he seemed to take the most sudden and peculiar interest in me, and, greatly to the exaltation of my inward consciousness of great deserts, plied me with a series of the sharpest questionings as to my whereabouts “when I was at home”—my destination, and above all, my route—with the roundest and most voluble protestations as to the affectionate interest he felt in seeing that all travellers, especially such looking ones as I was, were properly warned of the complicated impositions and knaveries practised habitually upon them, by the many transportation lines in this wicked city; and to wind up this touching exordium, he frankly assured me that the “Stage Route” across the mountains was the cheapest—the most safe—the “*most genteelest*”—and altogether the route he would recommend to such a gentleman as me!

The milk of human kindness was somewhat stirred in my veins, responsive to this gratuitous exhibition of a broad philanthropy—but as it happened that I had determined upon the “Canal Route,” I waived, with the most thankful acknowledgments, any present committal, and gratefully accepted the card he thrust into my hand. But, as it most unfortunately occurred, I found the office of the “Canal Route” for Philadelphia, etc., was next door to our hotel, and I was tempted, weakly enough, no doubt! to go in and book my name “clear

through." Insensate creature that I was! The canal boats would not start till after dark, so that I spent the hours allotted to daylight by the cathedral clocks, in exploring the streets of this dim Cyclopiian city.

The incessant clang of sledge-hammers had become sufficiently monotonous when the evening closed in, and I was glad enough to take coach and be transported to the Canal Depot, when the usual vexations and delay consequent, had to be endured.

Finally, however, we got under weigh, with such a cargo of pigs, poultry, and humanity, as even canal boats are seldom blessed with. I stood upon tiptoe for the fresh air in the cabin, until the time had actually come when people *must* go to bed; when that awful personage, the Captain, summoned us all together, and informed us that every man, woman, and child aboard, must stow his, her, or itself away along the face of the narrow walls, in the succession of their registration during the day. Now, it happened that as gentlemen are not usually up before daybreak, that I stood first upon the first list, and was of course entitled to the first choice of hammocks. We panted in the centre of the close-jammed crowd, waiting till the ladies, who always take precedence in America, had been called off. As it happened that this right of choice was finally definitive for the route, and determined whether one should sleep upon a hammock, or the floor, or the tables, for several successive nights—it was a matter of no little moment.

It occurred while the ladies were being disposed of, that I heard above the buzz around me the name of Audubon spoken. My attention was instantly attracted by that magical sound. I listened in breathless eagerness. I heard a gentleman near me say—"Mr. Audubon is last on the list; I fear he will not get a bed, we are so crowded!"

I felt my heart leap.

"What," said I, leaning forward quickly, "is it possible Mr. Audubon can be aboard? I thought he was still on his Rocky Mountain tour!"

"We are just returning, sir," said the gentleman courteously, half smiling, as he observed the excited expression of my face.

"But you are joking, are you not?" said I, hardly able to realize so much happiness. "He cannot *really* be in this boat! Where? Which is he?"

"He *is* actually in this very cabin," said he, turning full upon me.

"The man of all others in the world I wanted to see most," I ejaculated, half inwardly.

"Well, there he is," said the gentleman laughing, as he pointed to a huge pile of green blankets and fur, which I had before observed stretched upon one of the benches, and took to be the fat bale of some Western trader.

"What, *that* Mr. Audubon?" I exclaimed, naïvely.

"Yes; he is taking a nap."

At that moment my name was called out by the Captain as entitled to the first choice of berths.

"I waive my right of choice in favour of Mr. Audubon," was my answer.

Now the green bale stirred a little—half turned upon its narrow resting-place, and, after a while, sat erect, and showed me, to my no small surprise, that there was a man inside of it.

A patriarchal beard fell, white and wavy, down his breast; a pair of hawk-like eyes gleamed sharply out from the fuzzy shroud of cap and collar.

I drew near, with a thrill of irrepressible curiosity. The moment my eyes took in the noble contour of that Roman face, I felt that it was *he*, and could be no one

else. Yes, it was Audubon in his wilderness garb, hale and alert, with sixty winters upon his shoulders, as one of his own "old eagles, feathered to the heel,"—fresh from where the floods are cradled amid crag-piled glooms, or flowery extended plains!

He looked as I had dreamed the antique Plato must have looked, with that fine, classic head, and lofty mien! He fully realized the hero of the ideal. With what eager and affectionate admiration I gazed upon him, the valorous and venerable Sage!

What a deathless and beautiful dedication his had been to the holy priesthood of nature! I felt that the very hem of his garments—of that rusty and faded green blanket, ought to be sacred to all devotees of science, and was so to me.

What an indomitable flame, that not

"The wreakful siege of battering years"

could quell, must fire that heroic heart! To think, that now, when "time had delved its parallels upon his brow"—when he had already accomplished the most Herculean labour of the age in his "Birds of America"—still unsatisfied, he should undertake a new, and as grand a work, upon the animals; and now he was returning with the trophies of science gathered on his toilsome and dangerous journeyings!

Ah, how I venerated him! How I longed to know him, and to be permitted to sit at his feet and learn, and hear his own lips discourse of those loveable themes which had so absorbed my life.

I scarcely slept that night, for my brain was teeming with novel and happy images. I determined to stretch to the utmost the traveller's license, and approach him in the morning. My happy fortune in having been able to make the "surrender" in his favour

assisted me, or else his quick eye detected at once the sympathy of our tastes; be that as it may, we were soon on good terms.

Like all men who have lived much apart with nature, he was not very talkative. His conversation was impulsive and fragmentary; that, taken together with a mellow Gallic idiom, rendered his style pleasingly titillating to a curious listener, as I was, eager to get at his stores of knowledge, and compare my own diffuse but extended observation with his profound accuracy.

The hours of that protracted journey glided by as in a dream. I was for ever at his side, catching with a delighted eagerness at those characteristic scraps that fell from his lips.

I was anxious to obtain an accurate insight into the man—the individual. I found rather more of the man of the world about him than I was inclined to expect, though every inch of him was symmetrical with his character of naturalist, and many inches are there in that, growing through tall cubits into the Titanic girth.

He had several new and curious animals along with him, which he had taken in those distant wilds where I had myself seen them in their freedom, and now they looked like old acquaintances to me; and I soon got up an intimacy with the swift Fox, the snarling Badger, and the Rocky Mountain Deer. He exhibited to me some of the original drawings of the splendid work on the Zoology of the continent, which his sons are now engaged in bringing out. I recognized in them the miraculous pencil of the "Birds of America." But I observed several personal traits that interested me very much.

The confinement we were subjected to on board the

canal-boat was very tiresome to his habits of freedom. We used to get ashore and walk for hours along the tow-path ahead of the boat; and I observed with astonishment that, though over sixty, he could walk me down with ease.

Now I was something of a walker, and was not very far advanced in years, and though I do not exactly affect the nimbleness of Cleopatra, who was seen to

“Hop forty paces through the public street,”

yet I pretend to very respectable ambulatory powers. Though, I say, I would not enter in a match with Gildersleeve, Colonel Stannard, Kit North, John Neal, or anybody else who has pedestriated himself into an Olympic crown; yet I do set up to be a walker, and I was not a little confounded at seeing this old man leave me panting to the leeward.

His physical energies seemed entirely unimpaired. Another striking evidence of this he gave me. A number of us were standing grouped around him, on the top of the boat, one clear, sunshiny morning; we were, at the same time, passing through a broken and very picturesque region; his keen eyes, with an abstracted, intense expression—an expression of looking over the heads of men around him, out into nature, peculiar to them—were glancing over the scenery as we glided through, when suddenly he pointed with his finger towards the fence of a field several hundred yards off, with the exclamation—

“See! yonder is a Fox Squirrel, running along the top rail! It is not often I have seen them in Pennsylvania!”

Now his power of vision must have been singularly acute to have distinguished that it was a *Fox* Squirrel at such a distance; for only myself and one other per-

on out of a dozen or two, who were looking in the same direction, detected the creature at all, and we could barely distinguish that there was some object moving on the rail. I asked him curiously if he was aware of its being a *Fox Squirrel*. He smiled, and flashed his hawk-like glance upon me, as he answered—
“Ah, I have an Indian’s eye!” And I had only to look into it to feel that he had.

These are slight but peculiar traits, in perfect keeping with his general characteristics as the naturalist and the man. Of course, I never permitted that acquaintance to fall through while he lived, and amidst the many and wearisome vicissitudes which have befallen since, I have retained, fresh and unimpaired, the memory of that journey through the mountains as one of the green places of the past where the sunlight always lives.

Thus it was I came first to meet him, laurelled and gray, my highest ideal of the Hunter-Naturalist—the old Audubon! Ah, the grandeur of that man’s life! Though it had filled my own with poetic yearnings in my youth, yet they have lost nothing in fire and earnest upward through my maturer age! Now that he is dead, and I can look upon his career with sobered vision, undazzled by the prestige of presence, unbiassed by personal affection, and from the stand-point of wide experience and comparison with other men, still I can speak of as a reality what was once more like the thought of a boy’s day-dream,—that in all the world’s history of wonderful men, there is not, to my mind, one story of life so filled with beautiful romance as this of J. J. Audubon, considered in the mere details of its facts. Take them in his own simple words as furnished by himself incidentally, in the text of his great work, and what a wondrous tale it is!

We will hear, then, from his own lips something how the greatest of the Hunter-Naturalists was developed, catch glimpses of the boy Audubon, artless conveyed through his own memories and impressions of early scenes, yearnings and impressions, up to the period of manly achievement; of doubts, of failure, and finally of gloriously consummated triumph! In his charming preface to the "Biography of Birds," written during the March of 1831, he says of himself:—

"I received life and light in the New World. When I had hardly yet learned to walk, and to articulate those first words always so endearing to parents, the productions of nature that lay spread all around were constantly pointed out to me. They soon became my playmates; and before my ideas were sufficiently formed to enable me to estimate the difference between the azure tints of the sky and the emerald hue of the bright foliage, I felt that an intimacy with them, not consisting of friendship merely, but bordering on frenzy, must accompany my steps through life; and now, more than ever, am I persuaded of the power of those early impressions. They laid such hold upon me, that, when removed from the woods, the prairies, and the brooks, and shut up from the view of the wide Atlantic, I experienced none of those pleasures most congenial to my mind. None but aerial companions suited my fancy. No roof seemed so secure to me as that formed of the dense foliage under which the feathered tribes were seen to resort, or the caves and fissures of the massy rock to which the dark-winged Cormorant and the Curlew retired to rest, or to protect themselves from the fury of the tempest. My father generally accompanied my steps, procured birds and flowers for me with great eagerness; pointed out the elegant movements of the former, the beauty and softness of their plumage, the

manifestations of their pleasure or sense of danger, and he always perfect forms and splendid attire of the latter. My valued preceptor would then speak of the departure and return of birds with the seasons, would describe their haunts, and, more wonderful than all, their change of livery; thus exciting me to study them, and to raise my mind towards their great Creator.

“A vivid pleasure shone upon those days of my early youth, attended with a calmness of feeling that seldom failed to rivet my attention for hours, whilst I gazed in ecstasy upon the pearly and shining eggs, as they lay imbedded in the softest down, or among dried leaves and twigs, or were exposed upon the burning sand, or weather-beaten rock of our Atlantic shores. I was taught to look upon them as flowers yet in the bud. I watched their opening, to see how Nature had provided each different species with eyes, either open at birth or closed for some time after; to trace the slow progress of the young birds towards perfection, or admire the celerity with which some of them, while yet unfledged, removed themselves from danger to security.

“I grew up, and my wishes grew with my form. Those wishes, kind reader, were for the entire possession of all that I saw. I was fervently desirous of becoming acquainted with Nature. For many years, however, I was sadly disappointed, and for ever, doubtless, must I have desires that cannot be gratified. The moment a bird was dead, however beautiful it had been when in life, the pleasure arising from the possession of it became blunted; and although the greatest cares were bestowed in endéavours to preserve the appearance of nature, I looked upon its vesture as more than sullied—as requiring constant attention, and repeated mendings, while, after all, it could no longer be said to be fresh from the hands of its Maker. I wished to possess all

the productions of nature, but I wished life with them. This was impossible. Then what was to be done? I turned to my father, and made known to him my disappointment and anxiety. He produced a book of *Illustrations*. A new life ran in my veins. I turned over the leaves with avidity; and although what I saw was not what I longed for, it gave me a desire to copy nature. To Nature I went, and tried to imitate her, as in the days of my childhood I had tried to raise myself from the ground and stand erect, before nature had imparted the vigour necessary for the success of such an undertaking.

“How sorely disappointed did I feel for many years, when I saw that my productions were worse than those which I ventured (perhaps in silence) to regard as bad, in the book given me by my father! My pencil gave birth to a family of cripples. So maimed were most of them, that they resembled the mangled corpses on a field of battle, compared with the integrity of living men. These difficulties and disappointments irritated me, but never for a moment destroyed the desire of obtaining perfect representations of nature. The worse my drawings were, the more beautiful did I see the originals. To have been torn from the study would have been as death to me. My time was entirely occupied with it. I produced hundreds of these rude sketches annually; and for a long time, at my request, they made bonfires on the anniversaries of my birthday.

“Patiently, and with industry, did I apply myself to study; for, although I felt the impossibility of giving life to my productions, I did not abandon the idea of representing nature. Many plans were successively adopted; many masters guided my hand. At the age of seventeen, when I returned from France, whither I had gone to receive the rudiments of my education, my

drawings had assumed a form. David had guided my hand in tracing objects of large size. Eyes and noses belonging to giants, and heads of horses represented in ancient sculpture, were my models. These, although fit subjects for men intent on pursuing the higher branches of the art, were immediately laid aside by me. I returned to the woods of the New World with fresh ardour, and commenced a collection of drawings, which I henceforth continued, and which is now publishing under the title of 'The Birds of America.'

"In Pennsylvania—a beautiful State, almost central on the line of our Atlantic shores—my father, in his desire of proving my friend through life, gave me what Americans call a beautiful 'plantation,' refreshed during the summer heats by the waters of the Schuylkill river, and traversed by a creek named Perkioming. Its fine woodlands, its extensive fields, its hills crowned with evergreens, offered many subjects to my pencil. It was here that I commenced my simple and agreeable studies, with as little concern about the future as if the world had been made for me. My rambles invariably commenced at break of day; and to return wet with dew, and bearing a feathered prize, was, and ever will be, the highest enjoyment for which I have been fitted.

"Yet think not, reader, that the enthusiasm which I felt for my favourite pursuits was a barrier opposed to the admission of gentler sentiments. Nature, which had turned my young mind toward the bird and the flower, soon proved her influence upon my heart. Be it enough to say, that the object of my passion has long since blessed me with the name of husband. And now let us return; for who cares to listen to the love-tale of a naturalist, whose feelings may be supposed to be as light as the feathers which he delineates?

"For a period of nearly twenty years, my life was

a succession of vicissitudes. I tried various branches of commerce, but they all proved unprofitable, doubtless because my whole mind was ever filled with my passion for rambling and admiring those objects of nature from which alone I received the purest gratification. I had to struggle against the will of all who at that period called themselves my friends. I must here, however, except my wife and children. The remarks of my other friends irritated me beyond endurance; and, breaking through all bonds, I gave myself entirely up to my pursuits. Any one acquainted with the extraordinary desire which I then felt of seeing and judging for myself, would doubtless have pronounced me callous to every sense of duty, and regardless of every interest. I undertook long and tedious journeys—ransacked the woods, the lakes, the prairies, and the shores of the Atlantic. Years were spent away from my family. Yet, reader, will you believe it, I had no other object in view than simply to enjoy the sight of nature. Never for a moment did I conceive the hope of becoming in any degree useful to my kind, until I accidentally formed acquaintance with the Prince of Musignano, at Philadelphia, to which place I went, with the view of proceeding eastward along the coast."

In April, 1824, he sought for patronage in Philadelphia, and, failing there, went to New York, with some better success; but, weary and depressed on the whole, he returned to nature for refreshing, and ascending that noble stream, the Hudson, glided over our broad lakes, to seek the wildest solitudes of the pathless and gloomy forests.

"It was in these forests," to quote his own words, "that, for the first time, I communed with myself as to the possible event of my visiting Europe again; and I began to fancy my work under the multiplying efforts

the graver. Happy days, and nights of pleasing dreams! I read over the catalogue of my collection, and thought how it might be possible for an unconnected and unaided individual like myself to accomplish the grand scheme.

"Eighteen months elapsed. I returned to my family, then in Louisiana, explored every portion of the vast woods around, and at last sailed towards the Old World. But before we visit the shores of hospitable England, I have the wish, good-natured reader, to give you some idea of my mode of executing the original drawings, from which the illustrations have been taken; and I sincerely hope that the perusal of these lines may excite in you a desire minutely to examine them.

"Merely to say that each object of my illustrations is of the size of nature, were too vague; for to many it might only convey the idea that they are so, more or less, according as the eye of the delineator may have been more or less correct in measurement simply obtained through that medium; and of avoiding error in this respect I am particularly desirous. Not only is every object, as a whole, of the natural size, but also every portion of each object. The compass aided me in its delineation, regulated and corrected each part, even to the very fore-shortening which now and then may be seen in the figures. The bill, the feet, the legs, the claws, the very feathers, as they project one beyond another, have been accurately measured. The birds, almost all of them, were killed by myself, after I had examined their motions and habits, as much as the case admitted, and were regularly drawn on or near the spot where I procured them. The positions may, perhaps, in some instances appear *outré*; but such supposed exaggerations can afford subject of criticism only to persons unacquainted with the feathered tribes; for, believe me,

nothing can be more transient or varied than the attitudes or positions of birds. The Heron, when warming itself in the sun, will sometimes drop its wings several inches, as if they were dislocated; the Swan may often be seen floating with one foot extended from the body, and some pigeons, you well know, turn quite over, when playing in the air. The flowers, plants, or portions of trees which are attached to the principal objects, have been chosen from amongst those in the vicinity of which the birds were found, and are not, as some persons have thought, the trees or plants upon which they always feed or perch.

"An accident which happened to two hundred of my original drawings nearly put a stop to my researches in ornithology. I shall relate it, merely to show you how far enthusiasm—for by no other name can I call the persevering zeal with which I laboured—may enable the observer of nature to surmount the most disheartening obstacles. I left the village of Henderson in Kentucky, situated on the bank of the Ohio, where I resided for several years, to proceed to Philadelphia on business. I looked to all my drawings before my departure, placed them carefully in a wooden box, and gave them in charge to a relative, with injunctions to see that no injury should happen to them. My absence was of several months; and when I returned, after having enjoyed the pleasures of home for a few days, I inquired after my box, and what I was pleased to call my treasure. The box was produced and opened; but, reader, feel for me,—a pair of Norway rats had taken possession of the whole, and had reared a young family amongst the gnawed bits of paper, which but a few months before represented nearly a thousand inhabitants of the air!

"The burning heat which instantly rushed through

My brain was too great to be endured, without affecting the whole of my nervous system. I slept not for several nights, and the days passed like days of oblivion,—until, the animal powers being recalled into action, through the strength of my constitution, I took up my pen, my note-book, and my pencils, and went forth to the woods as gaily as if nothing had happened. I felt pleased that I might now make much better drawings than before, and, ere a period not exceeding three years had elapsed, I had my portfolio filled again.

“America being my country, and the principal pleasures of my life having been obtained there, I prepared to leave it with deep sorrow, after in vain trying to publish my illustrations in the United States. In Philadelphia, Wilson’s principal engraver, amongst others gave it as his opinion to my friends, that my drawings could never be engraved. In New York other difficulties presented themselves, which determined me to carry my collections to Europe.

“As I approached the coast of England, and for the first time beheld her fertile shores, the despondency of my spirits became very great. I knew not an individual in the country; and, although I was the bearer of letters from American friends and statesmen of great eminence, my situation appeared precarious in the extreme. I imagined that every individual whom I was about to meet might be possessed of talents superior to those of any on our side of the Atlantic! Indeed, as I for the first time walked on the streets of Liverpool, my heart nearly failed me, for not a glance of sympathy did I meet in my wanderings for two days. To the woods I could not betake myself, for there were none near.”

Well received in England, he passes through to Scotland.

Gallant and beautiful spirit! there was no need of woods for thee to hide! The noble work of Wilson had not long been finished then, and men were not doing wondering at this glorious achievement of the Paisley weaver, who had left their own shores years ago, a poor and obscure adventurer, for the forests of the New World when another pilgrim from those far wildernesses made his appearance among the learned circles of the Scottish capital. He carried a portfolio under his arm, and came too, on an adventure to this seat of the mind's royalty and of voluptuous wealth. There was a look of nature's children about him. His curled and shining hair thrown back from his open front, fell in dark clusters down his broad shoulders. Those bold features moulded after

“The high, old Roman fashion,”—

those sharp, steady eyes, that straight figure and elastic tread, were a strange blending of the red man and the pure-blooded noble. A curious trader he! But, when his wondrous wares were all unfolded and spread out before their eyes, what a delicious thrilling of amazement and delight was felt through those fastidious circles. A gorgeous show! The heart of a virgin world unfolded—teeming with rare and exquisite thoughts—that had been born in the deep solitudes of her young musings, and thus caught by this weird enchanter's pencil as they gleamed past in all the bright hues and airy graces of their fresh fleeting lives—with flower and tree and rock and wave, as beautiful and new as they, thrown in to make the fairy pageant real! It was a surprising revelation, and when they knew that it had all been their work—the obscure, unaided work, through years of enduring toil—of that young wanderer, they were filled with overwhelming admiration. They loaded him with

ulation and with honours; they took him by the hand generously, and led him up to his success.

Such was the effect of Audubon's appearance in Edinburgh. In that glorious portfolio men felt that a great creation lay folded; in that modest backwoodsman they saw the first of the hunter-naturalists—in the simple grandeur of that presence they recognised the type of those masterful spirits of the race of the olden time, the stories of whose deeds are the histories of ages. They were awed, they loved him—they nourished and they cherished him. How could it be otherwise among cultivated people?—for to such there is in genius a compelling sense that will bear through its purposes in their love.

But it is not on his triumphal progress through Europe that we prefer to accompany him. Nor is it of so much interest to us to hear that such men as Cuvier and Humboldt—who alone were his peers—pronounced his work on Birds the most magnificent monument art had yet erected to ornithology. The world has long long taken charge of his fame. It is of the man—the hunter-naturalist—out in the wilderness highways and byways of the unreclaimed earth, that we would know more intimately. It is rather the methods of the workman that we would now see; for it is well enough known that never in the annals of individual achievement did unaided enthusiasm, through poverty and neglect, accomplish so much single-handed against such tremendous odds.

The world, by the way, has been told many times of the immense pecuniary difficulties to be overcome by him from the commencement, but not yet, perhaps, in his own touching language, have they heard some of the effects of these struggles upon his temper and feelings. He says, in the introduction to the third volume:—

"Ten years have now elapsed since the first number of my Illustrations of the Birds of America made its appearance. At that period I calculated that the engravers would take sixteen years in accomplishing their task; and this I announced in my prospectus, and talked of to my friends. Of the latter, not a single individual seemed to have the least hope of my success, and several strongly advised me to abandon my plans, dispose of my drawings, and return to my country. I listened with attention to all that was urged on the subject, and often felt deeply depressed, for I was well aware of many of the difficulties to be surmounted, and perceived that no small sum of money would be required to defray the necessary expenses. Yet never did I seriously think of abandoning the cherished object of my hopes. When I delivered the first drawings to the engraver, I had not a single subscriber. Those who knew me best called me rash; some wrote to me that they did not expect to see a second fasciculus; and others seemed to anticipate the total failure of my enterprise. But my heart was nerved, and my reliance on that Power on whom all must depend brought bright anticipations of success.

"Having made arrangements for meeting the first difficulties, I turned my attention to the improvement of my drawings, and began to collect from the pages of my journals the scattered notes which referred to the habits of the birds represented by them. I worked early and late; and glad I was to perceive that the more I laboured, the more I improved. I was happy, too, to find that, in general, each succeeding plate was better than its predecessor; and when those who had at first endeavoured to dissuade me from undertaking so vast an enterprise, complimented me on my more favourable prospects, I could not but feel happy. Number after

umber appeared in regular succession, until, at the end of four years of anxiety, my engraver, Mr. Havell, presented me with the first volume of the 'Birds of America.'

"Convinced, from a careful comparison of the plates, that at least there had been no falling off in the execution, I looked forward with confidence to the termination of the next four years' labour. Time passed on, and I returned from the forests and wilds of the western world to congratulate my friend Havell just when the last plate of the second volume was finished.

"About that time, a nobleman called upon me with his family, and requested me to show them some of the original drawings, which I did with the more pleasure that my visitors possessed a knowledge of ornithology. In the course of our conversation, I was asked how long it might be until the work should be finished. When I mentioned eight years more, the nobleman shrugged up his shoulders, and, sighing, said, 'I may not see it finished, but my children will; and you may please to add my name to your list of subscribers.' The young people exhibited a mingled expression of joy and sorrow; and when I with them strove to dispel the cloud that seemed to hang over their father's mind, he smiled, bade me be sure to see that the whole work should be punctually delivered, and took his leave. The solemnity of his manner I could not forget for several days; I often thought that neither might I see the work completed; but at length I exclaimed, 'My sons may!' And now that another volume, both of my Illustrations and of my Biographies is finished, my trust in Providence is augmented, and I cannot but hope that myself and my family together may be permitted to see the completion of my labours."

How that prayer has been answered, the facts since,

with which the world is familiar, have shown. He obtained one hundred and eighty subscribers to the work, at one thousand dollars each, and lived, not only to complete it, surrounded by his sons, but, as I have already mentioned, had by their aid commenced, and even completed, another great work on the Quadrupeds of America.

It is not the least extraordinary characteristic of this man's unexampled career, that he should, until ever late in life, have been entirely unconscious of the powers he possessed. Indeed, he repeatedly asserts, that it was not until his meeting with Charles Lucien Bonaparte on his visit to Philadelphia in 1824, that he had any thought whatever of publishing, or dreamed that he had been accomplishing anything very extraordinary. Bonaparte was astonished—astounded even, in looking over his portfolio of drawings, and exclaimed, in an irrepressible burst of admiration and wonder at the simplicity of his unconsciousness,—

“Mr. Audubon, do you know that you are a great man—a very great man—the greatest ornithologist in the world?”

It was this language that first filled him with the thought of publishing, which, as we have seen, on his retirement to the solitudes of nature, near the sources of the Hudson, became gradually nourished into a purpose. But let us see the most touching instance of this unconsciousness, in his own relation of the manner of his first interview with Wilson, the Ornithologist. He lived for two years in Louisville, Kentucky, which was then a comparatively small town. He was engaged in business as a merchant or trader, yet nevertheless says:—

“During my residence at Louisville, much of my time was employed in my ever favourite pursuits.]

drew and noted the habits of everything which I procured, and my collection was daily augmenting, as every individual who carried a gun always sent me such birds or quadrupeds as he thought might prove useful to me. My portfolios already contained upwards of two hundred drawings.

“One fair morning, I was surprised by the sudden entrance into our counting-room of Mr. Alexander Wilson, the celebrated author of the ‘American Ornithology,’ of whose existence I had never until that moment been apprised. This happened in March, 1810. How well do I remember him, as he then walked up to me! His long, rather hooked nose, the keenness of his eyes, and his prominent cheek-bones, stamped his countenance with a peculiar character. His dress, too, was of a kind not usually seen in that part of the country: a short coat, trousers, and a waistcoat of gray cloth. His stature was not above the middle size. He had two volumes under his arm; and as he approached the table at which I was working, I thought I discovered something like astonishment in his countenance. He, however, immediately proceeded to disclose the object of his visit, which was to procure subscriptions for his work. He opened his books, explained the nature of his occupations, and requested my patronage.

“I felt surprised and gratified at the sight of his volumes, turned over a few of the plates, and had already taken a pen to write my name in his favour, when my partner rather abruptly said to me, in French, ‘My dear Audubon, what induces you to subscribe to this work? Your drawings are certainly far better; and again, you must know as much of the habits of American birds as this gentleman.’ Whether Mr. Wilson understood French or not, or if the suddenness with which I paused disappointed him, I cannot tell; but I

clearly perceived that he was not pleased. Vanity and the encomiums of my friend prevented me from subscribing. Mr. Wilson asked me if I had many drawings of birds. I rose, took down a large portfolio, laid it on the table, and showed him, as I would show you, kind reader, or any other person fond of such subjects, the whole of the contents, with the same patience with which he had shown me his own engravings.

“His surprise appeared great, as he told me he never had the most distant idea that any other individual than himself had been engaged in forming such a collection. He asked me if it was my intention to publish; and when I answered in the negative, his surprise seemed to increase. And, truly, such was not my intention; for, until long after, when I met the Prince of Musignano in Philadelphia, I had not the least idea of presenting the fruits of my labours to the world. Mr. Wilson now examined my drawings with care, asked if I should have any objections to lending him a few during his stay; to which I replied that I had none. He then bade me good morning, not, however, until I had made an arrangement to explore the woods in the vicinity along with him, and had promised to procure for him some birds, of which I had drawings in my collection, but which he had never seen.

“It happened that he lodged in the same house with us; but his retired habits, I thought, exhibited either a strong feeling of discontent, or a decided melancholy. The Scotch airs which he played sweetly on his flute made me melancholy too, and I felt for him. I presented him to my wife and friends, and, seeing that he was all enthusiasm, exerted myself as much as was in my power to procure for him the specimens which he wanted. We hunted together, and obtained birds which he had never before seen; but, reader, I did not sub-

scribe to his work, for, even at that time, my collection was greater than his. Thinking that perhaps he might be pleased to publish the results of my researches, I offered them to him, merely on condition that what I had drawn, or might afterwards draw and send to him, should be mentioned in his work as coming from my pencil. I at the same time offered to open a correspondence with him, which I thought might prove beneficial to us both. He made no reply to either proposal, and before many days had elapsed, left Louisville, on his way to New Orleans, little knowing how much his talents were appreciated in our little town, at least by myself and my friends.

“Some time elapsed, during which I never heard of him, or of his work. At length, having occasion to go to Philadelphia, I, immediately after my arrival there, inquired for him, and paid him a visit. He was then drawing a White-headed Eagle. He received me with civility, and took me to the Exhibition Rooms of Rembrandt Peale, the artist, who had then portrayed Napoleon crossing the Alps. Mr. Wilson spoke not of birds or drawings. Feeling, as I was forced to do, that my company was not agreeable, I parted from him; and after that I never saw him again. But judge of my astonishment some time after, when on reading the thirty-ninth page of the ninth volume of ‘American Ornithology,’ I found in it the following paragraph:—

“‘*March 23rd, 1810.*—I bade adieu to Louisville, to which place I had four letters of recommendation, and was taught to expect much of everything there; but neither received one act of civility from those to whom I was recommended, one subscriber, nor one new bird; though I delivered my letters, ransacked the woods repeatedly, and visited all the characters likely

to subscribe. Science or literature has not one friend in this place.' ”

We will not add to the gloom which has followed the illustrious life of poor Wilson to his grave, by any officious comments upon the tenour of this short narrative. I will add, though, that it should be remembered, in forming any judgment of that strong, moody man, that he had bitter woes enough to contend with, not only in his friendless early days, but in the harsh isolation of his weary wanderings and unappreciated after-life, to have grown a gall beneath an angel's wing. Withal, the bursts of sunshine and exultation which shone through his eloquent writings often, show that his inner self had fed healthfully sometimes upon the pure and peaceful teachings of his gentle pursuits. He was a man whose profound genius, darkened by misfortune, was sombrely illuminated by a noble enthusiasm. He, too, may be accepted as a Hunter-Naturalist, but not as first among them all! To J. J. Audubon, undoubtedly, that high place belongs, though this has been disputed by many, and even “Christopher North” has been found to assert them as “equals.”

This cannot be admitted here. Then how stands the case?

When the noble work of Wilson, the unknown Scotchman, began to make its appearance, Ornithology among us was in its infancy, and the freshness of his hardy original genius was promptly recognized and keenly relished abroad, in contrast with the stale, unprofitable treatment of the predominant school of the Technicalists.

It was at once perceived how much the attractiveness of his subject was heightened by the circumstances of his personal intimacy and association with the creatures described in many of the conditions of natural freedom.

His fine descriptions had a savour of the wilderness about them. His birds were living things, and led out the heart in yearning through the scenes of a primeval earth to recognize them in their own wild homes, singing to the solitude from some chosen spray, or plying, with careless grace, on busy wings, their curious sports and labours.

Here is the legitimate purpose of works of this character—to fill the mind with such pleasant images as will win the affections forth from the dull centre of mere human sympathies, through all the wonders of the outer world, up, with a wise and chastened adoration, to the Power that framed it. Wilson, to a greater degree than any man who had yet appeared, felt himself, and caused others to recognize, this apostleship of the true Naturalist.

It was an era, a happy era in philosophy, when art had linked its remoter teachings to the hearts of men; and to Wilson undoubtedly belongs the glory of having fairly pioneered its ushering. It is impossible to regard the labours of this man, even in a purely scientific light, without astonishment; but when we come to take into consideration all the pitiable afflictions and degrading misery entailed upon him by "caste," in his own country, we are lost in affectionate admiration of his indomitable genius, as we see the shrunk veins of the haggard emigrant swelling, when he has touched our shore, with a new life hardy enough to cope with the rude elements by which he found himself surrounded, and carry through triumphantly his remarkable undertaking.

Spirits with the vigour in them his possessed, ask only the vital air of freedom. Difficulties then are nothing. It is no wonder, when those trophies which he had wrestled for alone with Nature here in her bare and unhoused wilds, and had won through trials and

poverty, unassisted, had been returned to Scotland, that country which drove him forth in rags, and it had been offered a share of his glory for its gold, that it should have poured out freely the dross upon him in very shame. Nor is it surprising, that in the eager re-action of its penitence, it should continue to exalt him too highly—claiming for him, to the detriment of others, more than his just dues.

We think it very natural, that glorious old "Christopher," puzzled between the heartfelt and generous recognition he hardly conceals, of the out-of-sight supremacy of Audubon, and some compunctious qualms of a yet farther expiation due to the shade of the neglected Wilson, should have split the difference, by making them "brothers."

Well, and brothers they are, by all those sacred bonds which link the tall fraternity of genius—brothers they are in all the higher virtues of manhood—brothers they are in the yet more intimate sense, that the same objects and the same field have been laboured upon by each; but, that they are equals in the sense of Christopher's "same stature," we altogether deny.

First—in that, though Wilson displayed the noblest elements of greatness in the staunch, unconquerable vigour with which he met the difficulties in his path—Audubon exhibited quite as much "game," and in the proportionable grandeur of his scheme, had full as many trials to surmount.

First—in that, while the biographies of Wilson were full of natural spirit, of grace and power, greatly beyond all his predecessors, yet those of Audubon are far more minute and carefully detailed—introducing us, one after another, to a more intimate fellowship with each individual of the wide family of his love, through every piquant and distinctive trait of gesture, air, and

movement, characterizing all the phases of their nature—without the faults of generalization, and too much credence in hear-say, or a gloomy and unphilosophic spirit—since the mild and loving geniality of childhood breathes through every line.

First, moreover, by the reason that, while the drawings of Wilson are advanced upon all that had yet been accomplished, are free and accurate in outline, and sometimes even elegant in finish, yet those of Audubon are superior to them beyond all measure of comparison.

And here is the clear ground of distinction on which the more powerful genius steps forth in the proper garb of its own striking and unmistakeable individuality, and appeals to the eye at once for a recognition of its creations, as alone original and apart from all others. Audubon's drawings are quite as singular and unapproached as any one of the phenomena of art by which we mark the ages.

Wilson's pencil has been content with a mere portraiture, correct, indeed, of proportion, and a colour barely suggestive; but the pencil of the necromancer has not only caught the play of sunlight, shivered gorgeous in metallic hues from each particular fibre of their plumes (in a word, created the true style of colouring), but has stilled these arrowy cleavers of the elements amidst their own clouds, upon the very waves on which they loved "to sit and swing," by "the beached verge," on the precipitous perch, or twig, and leaf, and berry of the boughs that were their homes—stilled them, too, in all the character of passionate life—their loves, battles, chases, gambols, thefts—the grotesquery and grace, every mode and mood of their being amidst their native scenes.

Each plate is a full-length family portrait, with all the accessories historical. They are perfect in themselves,

and tell the whole story more clearly than words could do. Taken apart, they are chapters in the "Illuminated Bible" of nature—and very pleasant is the creed they teach, full of merry thoughts that make the heart go lightly; and plummy shapes, of strange undreamed-of beauty, come and go through the still air of musings, till we grow devout with thinking how God has made the roughest places of our earth so populous with lovely things that can surprise us into joy.

But without rhapsodizing. Wilson's claim to originality, in having first conceived the magnificent design of illustrating the birds of America, and led the van of practical science in its relations to ornithology, is certainly a most imposing one, and one with which no after-exertions of *mere talent*, however tireless, devoted, and successful it might be, could by any possibility compete. But genius can do what talent cannot. It is above all rules and "saws," and scorns the measure of an aphorism.

"When the power falls into the mighty hands
Of Nature—the spirit, giant-born,
Who listens only to himself——"

such things are effected, as an age of the leaden attainments of studied acquisition cannot accomplish.

Audubon, in the unique and striking originality of his drawings, and the whole treatment of his themes, has so far outstripped, in a bold freedom of design and execution, anything of Wilson's which may be denominated suggestive even, as to leave scarcely any room for comparison in this last issue. If Wilson was original, our ornithologist is infinitely more so.

Wilson has all the advantages in such a contrast. "He was first in the field," and with the world—that said, all is said. Whatever has been done since must be footed on to his account with fame, at least to the point

of careful balance with that of any one who has chanced to come after him. This is not strictly just.

We admit cheerfully all that is righteously due to the Paisley adventurer. But we cannot perceive why—when the fact that he is not entitled to it is clear as a sunburst to any observer—he should be thrust, rather than elevated, into an equal rank with Audubon. It has been too much the way of the world to ease its conscience of present injustice and neglect of genius by an internal reservation that it will pile up posthumous honours mountain high.

Now it is surely to be apprehended that this genius, though “of so airy and light a quality,” has yet something to seek “of the earth, earthy,” in common with the rest of men; and that, therefore, the recognizing, with its own proper eyes, the just claims of an original mind, by the country to which it has added lustre, cannot be to it a matter of indifference. Audubon has nothing of glory to ask of us. But this his memory demands, that we, his countrymen, should guard his honours from even the shadow of infringement. We drove him to the embrace of a foreign land for patronage; but there, amidst all the pomp of courts and the intoxication of sudden success, he was still proudly the American woodsman; nothing could damp that noble pride, and through every page he has written, we can still see it looking out with the same calm, abiding affection. We should not, then, be the last to vindicate such valorous faith. The man of his age, the illustrious Frenchman, has led the way in defining his supremacy, and yet the American mind, since Professor Wilson pronounced his autocratic fiat, that they “were equals,” has been timid to say in plain words—No! our Audubon is regally the head and front of illustrative science; the dictum of Christopher to the contrary notwithstanding, he is in

this *the* ornithologist of the world, and the favourite Wilson must be content to stand below him.

But hear this same cannie Scott, Christopher North discourse of Audubon *en dishabille*, with the straight-jacket of nationality thrown aside, and verily in his dressing-gown and slippers, when it is man to man that speaks as the heart moveth, not Scot to Scot! Thus, in the "Noctes" he discourseth, *sotto voce*.

"We were sitting one night lately all alone by ourselves, almost unconsciously eyeing the embers, fire without flame, in the many-visioned grate, but at times aware of the symbols and emblems there beautifully built up, of the ongoings of human life, when a knocking not loud but resolute, came to the front door, followed by the rustling thrill of the bell-wire, and then by a tinkling far below, too gentle to waken the house, that continued to enjoy the undisturbed dream of its repose. At first we supposed it might be but some late-home-going knight-errant from a feast of shells, in a mood 'between malice and true love,' seeking to disquiet the slumbers of Old Christopher, in expectation of seeing his night-cap (which he never wears) popped out of the window, and hearing his voice (of which he is chary in the open air) simulating a scold upon the audacious sleep-breaker. So we benevolently laid back our heads on our easy-chair, and pursued our speculations on the state of affairs in general, and more particularly on the floundering fall of that inexplicable people—the Whigs. We had been wondering, and of our wondering found no end, what could have been their chief reasons for committing suicide. It appeared a case of very singular *felo de se*—for they had so timed the 'rash act' as to excite strong suspicions in the public mind that his Majesty had committed murder. Circumstances, however, had soon come to light that proved to demonstration

that the wretched Ministry had laid violent hands on itself, and effected its purpose by strangulation. There was the fatal black ring visible round the neck, though a mere thread; there were the bloodshot eyes protruding from the sockets; there the lip-biting teeth clenched in the last convulsions; and there—sorriest sight of all—was the ghastly suicidal smile, last relic of the laughter of despair. But the knocking would not leave the door, and, listening to its character, we were assured that it came from the fist of a friend, who saw light through the chinks of the shutter, and knew, moreover, that we never put on the shroud of death's pleasant brother, sleep, till "ae wee short hour ayont the twal," and often not till earliest cockcrow, which chanticleer utters somewhat drowsily, and then replaces his head beneath his wing, supported on one side by a partlet, on the other by a hen. So we gathered up our slippered feet from the rug, lamp in hand stalked along the lobbies, unchained and unlocked the oak which our faithful night porter Somnus had sported—and lo! a figure muffled up in a cloak, and furred like a Russ, who advanced familiarly into the hall, extended both hands, and then embracing us, bade God bless us, and pronounced, with somewhat of a foreign accent, the name in which we and the world rejoice—"Christopher North!" We were not slow in returning the hug fraternal—for who was it but the "American Woodsman?"—even Audubon himself—fresh from the Floridas, and breathing of the pure air of far-off Labrador!

"Three years and upwards had fled since we had taken farewell of the illustrious ornithologist—on the same spot—at the same hour; and there was something ghost-like in such return of a dear friend from a distant region—almost as if from the land of spirits. It seemed as if the same moon again looked at us—but then she

was wan and somewhat sad—now clear as a diamond, and all the starry heavens wore a smile. ‘Our words they were no mony feck,’ but, in less time than we have taken to write it, we two were sitting cheek by jowl, and hand in hand, by that essential fire; while we showed by our looks that we both felt, now they were over, that three years were but as one day! The cane coal-scuttle, instinct with spirit, beated the fire of its own accord, without word or beck of ours, as if placed there by the hands of one of our wakeful Lares; in globe of purest crystal the Glenlivet shone; unasked the bright brass kettle began to whisper it sweet ‘under song;’ and a centenary of the fairest oysters native to our isle turned towards us their languishing eyes, unseen the Nereid that had on the instant wafted them from the procreant cradle beds of Prestonpans. Grace said, we drew in to supper, and hobnobbing, from elegant long-shank, down each naturalist’s gullets graciously descended, with a gurgle, the mildest, the meekest, the very Moses of ales.

“Audubon, ere half an hour had elapsed, found an opportunity of telling us that he had never seen us in a higher state of preservation—and, in a low voice, whispered something about the eagle renewing his youth. We acknowledged the kindness by a remark on bold bright birds of passage that find the seasons obedient to their will, and wing their way through worlds still rejoicing in the perfect year. But too true friends were we not to be sincere in all we seriously said; and while Audubon confessed that he saw rather more plainly than when we parted the crowfeet in the corners of our eyes, we did not deny that we saw in him an image of the *Falco Leucocephalus*; for that, looking on his ‘*carum caput*,’ it answered his own description of that handsome and powerful bird, viz., ‘the general colour of the

plumage above is dull hair-brown, the lower parts being deeply brown, broadly margined with grayish white.' But here he corrected us: for 'Surely, my dear friend,' quoth he, 'you must admit I am a living specimen of the adult bird, and you remember my description of him in my first volume.' And thus blending our gravities and our gaieties, we sat facing one another, each with his last oyster on the prong of his trident, which disappeared, like all mortal joys, between a smile and a sigh.

"How similar—in much—our dispositions; yet in almost all how dissimilar our lives! Since last we parted, 'we scarcely heard of half a mile from home'—he tanned by the suns and beaten by the storms of many latitudes; we like a ship laid up in ordinary, or anchored close in-shore within the same sheltering bay, with sails unfurled and flags flying but for sake of show on some holiday—he like a ship that every morning has been dashing through a new world of waves, often close-reefed or under bare poles, but oftener affronting the heavens with a whiter and swifter cloud than any hoisted by the combined fleets in the sky. And now, with canvas unrent, and masts unsprung, returned to the very buoy she left. Somewhat faded, indeed, in her appareling, but her hull sound as ever, nor a speck of dry rot in her timbers; her keel unscathed by rock; her cut-water yet sharp as new-whetted scythe ere the mower renews his toil; her figure-head, that had so often looked out for squalls, now 'patient as the brooding dove;' and her bowsprit—but let us man the main-brace; nor is there purer spirit, my trusty frère, in the Old World or the New.

"It was quite a Noctes. Audubon told us—by snatches—all his travels' history, with many an anecdote interspersed of the dwellers among the woods—bird, beast, and man.

"All this and more he told us, with a cheerful voice and animated eyes, while the dusky hours were noiselessly wheeling the chariot of Night along the star-losing sky; and we, too, had something to tell him of our own home-loving obscurity, not ungladdened by studies sweet in the forest, till Dawn yoked her dappled coursers for one single slow stage, and then jocund Morn leaping up on the box, took the ribbons in her rosy fingers, and, after a dram of dew, blew her bugle, and drove like blazes right on towards the gates of Day."

"His great work," says Professor Wilson elsewhere, "was indeed a perilous undertaking for a stranger in Britain, without the patronage of powerful friends, and with no very great means of his own—all of which he embarked in the enterprise dearest to his heart. Had it failed, Audubon would have been a ruined man, and that fear must have sometimes dismally disturbed him, for he is not alone in life, and is a man of strong family affections. But happily those nearest his breast are as enthusiastic in the love of natural science as himself, and were all willing to sink or swim with the beloved husband and venerated father. America may well be proud of him, and he gratefully records the kindness he has experienced from so many of her most distinguished sons. In his own fame he was just and generous to all who excel in the same studies; not a particle of jealousy is in his composition,—a sin that, alas! seems too easily to beset too many of the most gifted spirits in literature and science; nor is the happiest genius—imaginative or intellectual, such is the frailty of poor human nature at the best—safe from the access of that dishonouring passion."

Just and generously said, most loyal Christopher! may thy giant shadow never be less!

CHAPTER II.

AUDUBON AND BOONE.

Audubon's advice to young naturalists—How to attain accuracy in delineation—Pains Audubon took to this end—His trip to Labrador—To the St. John's River—A storm in the woods—Florida "Keys"—Good sport—A hurricane among the "Keys"—The Mule "Keys"—Wrecks and Wreckers—The Ohio, and a storm on its banks—An earthquake—Perilous situation—Daniel Boone, his origin, character, and career—First meeting of Audubon and Boone—Rifle shooting in Kentucky—Incidents in the life of Boone—The Bird of Washington—A Hunter's dreams.

I TURN from Audubon and his triumphs amid courtly scenes of the Old World, surrounded by the princely and the learned, to the Hunter-Naturalist at his labours in the wilderness of the New—the associate of the rugged Boone, and many another skin-dressed peer.

We may gather from his generous exhortation to younger naturalists to take the field, interesting features of what may be supposed to have been his own method of conducting his investigations when abroad with nature—something of the sort of training by which his remarkable character was formed, and the modes and circumstances under which his works grew. After saying that the list of new species had been nearly doubled since the time of Alexander Wilson's work, and that he felt confident very many species remain to be added by future observers, who shall travel the vast wastes extending northward and westward from the Canadas, and along the western slopes of the Rocky Mountains,

from Nootka to California; indeed, that he looks upon the whole range of those magnificent mountains as being yet unexplored—he addresses the young enthusiast:—

“Therefore, I would strongly advise you to make up your mind, shoulder your gun, muster all your spirits, and start in search of the interesting unknown, of which I greatly regret I can no more go in pursuit—not for want of will, but of the vigour and elasticity necessary for so arduous an enterprise. Should you agree to undertake the task, and prove fortunate enough to return full of knowledge, laden with objects new and rare, be pleased when you publish your work, to place my name in the list of subscribers, and be assured that I will not leave you in the lurch.

“Now supposing that you are full of ardour and ready to proceed, allow me to offer you a little advice. Leave nothing to memory, but note down all your observations with *ink*, not with a black-lead pencil, and keep in mind, that the more particulars you write at the time, the more you will recollect afterwards. Work not at night, but anticipate the morning dawn; and never think, for an instant, about the difficulties of ransacking the woods, the shores, or the barren grounds, nor be vexed when you have traversed a few hundred miles of country without finding a single new species. It may, indeed it not unfrequently happens, that after days, or even weeks of fruitless search, one enters a grove, or comes upon a pond, or forces his way through the tall grass of a prairie, and suddenly meets with several objects, all new, all beautiful, and perhaps all suited to the palate. Then how delightful will be your feelings, and how marvellously all fatigue will vanish!

“Think, for instance, that you are on one of the declivities of the Rocky Mountains, with shaggy and

abrupt banks on each side of you, while the naked cliffs tower high over head, as if with the wish to reach the sky. Your trusty gun has brought to the ground a most splendèd 'American Pheasant,' weighing fully two pounds! What a treat! You have been surprised at the length of its tail; you have taken the precise measurement of all its parts, and given a brief description of it. Have you read this twice and corrected errors and deficiencies? 'Yes,' you say. Very well; now you have begun your drawing of this precious bird. Ah! you have finished it. Now then, you skin the beautiful creature, and you are pleased to find it plump and fat. You have, I find, studied comparative anatomy under my friend Macgillivray, and at least have finished your examination of the œsophagus, gizzard, cocca, tracheæ, and bronchi. On the ignited clay castings of a buffalo you have laid the body, and it is now almost ready to satisfy the longing of your stomach, as it hisses in its odorous sap. The brook at your feet affords the very best drink that nature can supply, and I need not wish you better fare than that before you.

"Next morning you find yourself refreshed and re-invigorated, more ardent than ever, for success fails not to excite the desire of those who have entered upon the study of nature. You have packed your bird's skin flat in your box, rolled up your drawing round those previously made, and now, day after day, you push through thick and thin, sometimes with success, and sometimes without; but you at last return with such a load on your shoulders as I have often carried on mine. Having once more reached the settlements, you relieve your tired limbs by mounting a horse, and at length gaining a city, find means of publishing the results of your journey."

It requires very little exertion of fancy to see in

this a felicitous sketch of his own mode of "ransacking the woods, the shores, and the barren grounds."

It is just such hardy methods wherein consist the immeasurable superiority of Mr. Audubon over the whole school of stuffed-specimen delineators, whose indigestible crudities and wretched figures have proven the very night-mare of Natural Science in the Old World.

The idea of mounting knapsack and gun, and trudging thousands of miles through brake and morass, over "sands, shores, and desert wildernesses," encountering and braving the "imminence" of many perils, exposed to all "the spite of wreakful elements," purely for love of nature, and scientific accuracy, would have set one of these philosophical amateurs to shuddering. To bespatter black coat and silken hose, get half starved, and catch a death-cold in "collecting materials," were simply preposterous—when the Zoological gardens are close at hand, and the museums are filled with specimens. To be sure they have been dead a few years, and owe their present forms very much to the taste of the ignorant tradesman who "wired" and stuffed them—but the colours are there; *they* do not fade—that is, *not much*—and by a slight exertion of fancy it will be easy enough to make them "sister nature's own shape" of birds again, so that shortly a magnificent five volume illustrated work makes its appearance.

Contrast all such farrago with the language of a man who knew what he was doing. It was during those weary wanderings in which Audubon coursed back and forth "the seasons from equator to the pole," that in the far south he met with the "*Carracaras Eagle*," then a new bird to him. He says—

"I was not aware of the existence of the Carracara or Brazilian Eagle in the United States, until my visit

to the Floridas, in the winter of 1831. On the 24th of November of that year, in the course of an excursion near the town of St. Augustine, I observed a bird flying at a great elevation, and almost over my head. Convinced that it was unknown to me, and bent on obtaining it, I followed it nearly a mile, when I saw it sail towards the earth, making for a place where a group of Vultures were engaged in devouring a dead horse. Walking up to the horse, I observed the new bird alighted on it, and helping itself freely to the savoury meat beneath its feet; but it evinced a degree of shyness far greater than that of its associates, the Turkey Buzzards and Carrion Crows. I moved circuitously, until I came to a deep ditch, along which I crawled, and went as near to the bird as I possibly could; but finding the distance much too great for a sure shot, I got up suddenly, when the whole of the birds took to flight. The eagle, as if desirous of forming acquaintance with me, took a round and passed over me. I shot, but to my great mortification missed it. However, it alighted a few hundred yards off, in an open savanna, on which I laid myself flat on the ground, and crawled towards it, pushing my gun before me, amid burs and mud-holes, until I reached the distance of about seventy-five yards from it, when I stopped to observe its attitudes. The bird did not notice me; he stood on a lump of flesh, tearing it to pieces, in the manner of a Vulture, until he had nearly swallowed the whole. Being now less occupied, he spied me, erected the feathers of his neck, and, starting up, flew away, carrying the remainder of his prey *in his talons*. I shot a second time, and probably touched him; for he dropped his burden, and made off in a direct course across the St. Sebastian river, with alternate sailings and flappings, somewhat in the manner of a Vulture, but more gracefully. He never uttered a

cry, and I followed him wistfully with my eyes until he was quite out of sight.

The following day the bird returned, and was again among the Vultures, but at some distance from the carcass, the birds having been kept off by the dogs. I approached by the ditch, saw it very well, and watched its movements until it arose, when once more I shot, but without effect. It sailed off in large circles, gliding in a very elegant manner, and now and then diving downwards and rising again.

Two days elapsed before it returned. Being apprised by a friend of this desired event, instead of going after it myself, I despatched my assistant, who returned with it in little more than half an hour. I immediately began my drawing of it. The weather was sultry, the thermometer being at 89°; and, to my surprise, the vivid tints of the plumage were fading much faster than I had ever seen them in like circumstances, inso-much that Dr. Bell of Dublin, who saw it when fresh, and also when I was finishing the drawing twenty-four hours after, said he could scarcely believe it to be the same bird. How often have I thought of the changes which I have seen effected in the colours of the bill, legs, eyes, and even the plumage of birds, when looking on imitations which I was aware were taken from stuffed specimens, and which I well knew could not be accurate! The *skin*, when the bird was quite recent was of a bright yellow. The bird was extremely lousy. Its stomach contained the remains of a bull-frog, numerous hard-shelled worms, and a quantity of horse and deer-hair. The skin was saved with great difficulty and its plumage had entirely lost its original lightness of colouring. The deep red of the fleshy parts of the head had assumed a purplish livid hue, and the spoil scarcely resembled the coat of the living Eagle.

"I made a double drawing of this individual, for the purpose of showing all its feathers, which I hope will be found to be accurately represented."

This is the way in which one of the truest naturalists who ever delineated form of bird, beast, or creeping thing, considered it necessary to labour in his vocation, and this is *his* opinion about the evanescence of colours in the dead subjects, and, as is of course implied, of the undoubtedly wide play for the "fancy" in replacing them.

Hear, too, his account of the study of Water Birds. He says—

"The difficulties which are to be encountered in studying the habits of our Water Birds are great. He who follows the feathered inhabitants of the forests and plains, however rough or tangled the paths may be, seldom fails to obtain the objects of his pursuit, provided he be possessed of due enthusiasm and perseverance. The Land Bird flits from bush to bush, runs before you, and seldom extends its flight beyond the range of your vision. It is very different with the Water Bird, which sweeps afar over the wide ocean, hovers above the surges, or betakes itself for refuge to the inaccessible rocks on the shore. There, on the smooth sea-beach, you see the lively and active Sandpiper; on that rugged promontory the Dusky Cormorant; under the dark shade of yon cypress the Ibis and Heron; above you in the still air floats the Pelican or the Swan; while far over the angry billows scour the Fulmer and the Frigate Bird. If you endeavour to approach these birds in their haunts, they betake themselves to flight, and speed to places where they are secure from your intrusion.

"But the scarcer the fruit, the more prized it is; and seldom have I experienced greater pleasures than

when on the Florida Keys, under a burning sun, after pushing my bark for miles over a soapy flat, I have striven all day long, tormented by myriads of insects, to procure a heron new to me, and have at length succeeded in my efforts. And then how amply are the labours of the naturalist compensated, when, after observing the wildest and most distrustful birds, in their remote and almost inaccessible breeding-places, he returns from his journeys, and relates his adventures to an interested and friendly audience !”

It is thus the miraculous fidelity which characterizes his whole work, could only have been attained. His life is full of such incidents. It was indeed a habit from which he never deviated throughout the long years of his faithful dedication to his art, to make his drawings, if possible, on the very spot where the specimens had been obtained, without regard to heat, or cold, or storm. In making his drawings of the Golden Eagle, his incessant application through many hours of hurried labour, without rest, threw him into a violent fit of illness, which quite nearly cost him his life. In many other instances he suffered greatly. He sometimes worked, while in Labrador, until the pencil absolutely dropped from his stiffened fingers, frozen in that bitter air ; and so it was in the South, his exposure to the opposite extremes was quite as great.

But it is by contrasting his own accounts of his visit to Labrador and the Florida Keys, that we will best be enabled to apprehend the rugged zeal of his out-door methods in these widely separated regions. A visit to Labrador, which is the nesting-ground of a vast number of our migratory birds, having become necessary to the continuation of his work, the first volume only having been as yet issued, he chartered a small vessel, the *Ripley*, at Eastport, Maine, for the purpose ; and, accom-

panied by four young gentlemen fond of Natural History and adventure, set sail for the North. He describes his outfit, mode of life on board and ashore.

"We had purchased our stores at Boston, with the aid of my generous friend, Dr. Parkman, of that city; but unfortunately, many things necessary on an expedition like ours were omitted. At Eastport in Maine, we therefore laid in these requisites. No traveller, let me say, ought to neglect anything that is calculated to insure the success of his undertaking, or to contribute to his personal comfort, when about to set out on a long and perhaps hazardous voyage. Very few opportunities of replenishing stores of provision, clothing, or ammunition, occur in such a country as Labrador; and yet, we all placed too much confidence in the zeal and foresight of our purveyors at Eastport. We had abundance of ammunition, excellent bread, meat, and potatoes; but the butter was quite rancid, the oil only fit to grease our guns, the vinegar too liberally diluted with cider, the mustard and pepper deficient in due pungency. All this, however, was not discovered until it was too late to be remedied. Several of the young men were not clothed as hunters should be, and some of the guns were not so good as we could have wished. We were, however, fortunate with respect to our vessel, which was a notable sailer, did not leak, had a good crew, and was directed by a capital seaman.

"The hold of the schooner was floored, and an entrance made to it from the cabin, so that in it we had a very good parlour, dining-room, drawing-room, library, etc., all those apartments, however, being united into one. An extravagantly elongated deal table ranged along the centre; one of the party had slung his hammock at one end, and in its vicinity slept the cook and a lad who acted as armourer. The cabin was small: but

being fitted in the usual manner with side berths, was used for a dormitory. It contained a small table and a stove, the latter of diminutive size, but smoky enough to discomfit a host. We had adopted in a great measure the clothing worn by the American fishermen on that coast, namely, thick blue cloth trousers, a comfortable waistcoat, and a pea-jacket of blanket. Our boots were large, round-toe'd, strong, and well studded with large nails, to prevent sliding on the rocks. Worsted comforters, thick mittens, and round broad-brimmed hats, completed our dress, which was more picturesque than fashionable. As soon as we had an opportunity, the boots were exchanged for Esquimaux mounted mocassins of seal-skin, impermeable to water, light, easy, and fastening at top about the middle of the thigh to straps, which when buckled over the hips secured them well. To complete our equipment, we had several good boats, one of which was extremely light and adapted for shallow water.

No sooner had we reached the coast and got into harbour, than we agreed to follow certain regulations intended for the general benefit. Every morning the cook was called before three o'clock. At half-past three, breakfast was on the table, and everybody equipped. The guns, ammunition, botanical boxes, and baskets for eggs or minerals, were all in readiness. Our breakfast consisted of coffee, bread, and various other materials. At four, all except the cook and one seaman went off in different directions, not forgetting to carry with them a store of cooked provisions. Some betook themselves to the islands, others to the deep bays; the latter, on landing, wandered over the country until noon, when, laying themselves down on the rich moss, or sitting on the granite rock, they would rest for an hour, eat their dinner, and talk of their successes or disappointments.

often regret that I did not take sketches of the curious groups formed by my young friends on such occasions; and when, after returning at night, all were engaged in measuring, weighing, comparing, and dissecting the birds we had procured—operations which were carried on with the aid of a number of candles thrust into the necks of bottles. Here, one examined the flowers and leaves of a plant; there, another explored the recesses of a diver's gullet; while a third skinned a gull or a grouse. Nor was our journal forgotten. Arrangements were made for the morrow; and at twelve we left matters to the management of the cook, and retired to our roosts.

“If the wind blew hard, all went on shore, and, excepting on a few remarkably rainy days, we continued our pursuits much in the same manner during our stay in the country. The physical powers of the young men were considered in making our arrangements. Shattuck and Ingalls went together; the Captain and Cooledge were fond of each other, the latter having also been an officer; Lincoln and my son, being the strongest and most determined hunters, generally marched by themselves; and I went with one or other of the parties according to circumstances, although it was by no means my custom to do so regularly, as I had abundance of work on hand in the vessel.

“The return of my young companions and the sailors was always looked for with anxiety. On getting on board, they opened their budgets, and laid their contents on the deck, amid much merriment, those who had procured most specimens being laughed at by those who had obtained the rarest, and the former joking the latter in return. A substantial meal always awaited them; and fortunate we were in having a capital cook, although he was a little too fond of the bottle.

"Our 'Fourth of July' was kept sacred; and every Saturday night the toast of 'wives and sweethearts' was the first given, 'parents and friends' the last. Never was there a more merry set. Some with the violin and flute accompanied the voices of the rest, and few moments were spent in idleness. Before a month had elapsed, the spoils of many a fine bird hung around the hold; shrubs and flowers were in the press, and I had several drawings finished, some of which you have seen, and of which I hope you will ere long see the remainder. Large jars were filling apace with the bodies of rare birds, fishes, quadrupeds, and reptiles, as well as molluscous animals. We had several pets, too—Gulls, Cormorants, Guillemots, Puffins, Hawks, and a Raven. In some of the harbours, curious fishes were hooked in our sight, so clear was the water.

"We found that camping out at night was extremely uncomfortable, on account of the annoyance caused by flies and musquittoes, which attacked the hunters in swarms at all times, but more especially when they lay down, unless they enveloped themselves in thick smoke, which is not much more pleasant. Once, when camping, the weather became very bad, and the party was twenty miles distant from Whapatiguan, as Night threw her mantle over the earth. The rain fell in torrents, the north-east wind blew furiously, and the air was extremely cold. The oars of the boat were fixed so as to support some blankets, and a small fire was with difficulty kindled, on the embers of which a scanty meal was cooked. How different from a camp on the shores of the Mississippi, where wood is abundant, and the air generally not lacking heat—where musquittoes, though plentiful enough, are not accompanied by carraboo flies, and where the barkings of a joyful Squirrel, or the notes of the Barred Owl—that

grave buffoon of our western woods—never fail to gladden the camper as he cuts to the right and left such branches and canes as most easily supply materials for forming a lodging for the night! On the coast of Labrador there are no such things; granite and green moss are spread around; silence like that of the grave envelops all; and when night has closed the dreary scene from your sight, the wolves, attracted by the scent of the remains of your scanty repast, gather around you. Cowards as they are, they dare not venture on a charge; but their howlings effectually banish sleep. You must almost roast your feet to keep them warm, while your head and shoulders are chilled by the blast. When Morning comes, she smiles not on you with rosy cheeks, but appears muffled in a gray mantle of cold mist, which shows you that there is no prospect of a fine day. The object of the expedition, which was to procure some Owls that had been observed there by day, was entirely frustrated. At early dawn the party rose, stiffened and dispirited, and glad were they to betake themselves to their boats, and return to their floating home.

“Before we left Labrador, several of my young friends began to feel the want of suitable clothing. The sailor’s ever-tailoring system was, believe me, fairly put to the test. Patches of various colours ornamented knees and elbows; our boots were worn out; our greasy garments and battered hats were in harmony with our tanned and weather-beaten faces; and, had you met with us, you might have taken us for a squad of wretched vagrants; but we were joyous in the expectation of a speedy return, and exulted at the thoughts of our success.

“As the chill blast that precedes the winter’s tempest thickened the fogs on the hills, and ruffled the dark waters, each successive day saw us more anxious to

leave the dreary wilderness of grim rocks and desolate, moss-clad valleys. Unfavourable winds prevented us for awhile from spreading our white sails; but at last one fair morning smiled on the wintry world, the *Ripley* was towed from the harbour, her tackle trimmed, and, as we bounded over the billows, we turned our eyes towards the wilds of Labrador, and heartily bade them farewell for ever!"

He had previously visited the Florida coast alone, in 1831 and 1832, and during this expedition penetrated the interior by the St. John's River. All this region, but particularly the "Keys," is, like its Boreal contrast, Labrador, of peculiar interest to the Ornithologist, as the resort of myriads of water-fowl, and tropical birds of extraordinary splendour. He says:—

"While in this part of the peninsula, I followed my usual avocations, although with little success, it being then winter. I had letters from the Secretaries of the Navy and Treasury of the United States, to the commanding officers of vessels of war of the revenue service, directing them to afford me any assistance in their power; and the schooner *Spark* having come to St. Augustine, on her way to the St. John's River, I presented my credentials to her commander, Lieutenant Piercy, who readily, and with politeness, received me and my assistants on board. We soon after set sail, with a fair breeze. The strict attention to duty on board even this small vessel of war, afforded matter of surprise to me. Everything went on with the regularity of a chronometer; orders were given, answered to, and accomplished before they ceased to vibrate on the ear. The neatness of the crew equalled the cleanliness of the white planks of the deck; the sails were in perfect condition; and built, as the *Spark* was, for swift sailing, on she went gamboling from wave to wave.

"I thought that, while thus sailing, no feeling but that of pleasure could exist in our breasts; but, alas! how fleeting are our enjoyments. When we were almost at the entrance of the river, the wind changed, the sky became clouded, and, before many minutes had elapsed, the little bark was lying-to 'like a duck,' as the commander expressed himself. It blew a hurricane:—let it blow, reader. At the break of day we were again at anchor within the bar of St. Augustine.

"Our next attempt was successful. Not many hours after we had crossed the bar, we perceived the star-like glimmer of the light in the great lantern at the entrance of the St. John's River. This was before day-light; and, as the crossing of the sand-banks or bars, which occur at the mouths of all the streams at this peninsula, is difficult, and can be accomplished only when the tide is up, one of the guns was fired as a signal for the government pilot. The good man, it seems, was unwilling to leave his couch, but a second gun brought him in his canoe alongside. The depth of the channel was barely sufficient. My eyes, however, were not directed towards the water, but on high, where flew some thousands of snowy Pelicans, which had fled affrighted from their resting grounds. How beautifully they performed their broad gyrations, and how matchless, after awhile, was the marshalling of their files, as they flew past us!

"On the tide we proceeded apace. Myriads of Cormorants covered the face of the waters, and over it Fish-Crows innumerable were already arriving from their distant roosts. We landed at one place to search for the birds whose charming melodies had engaged our attention, and here and there some young Eagles we shot, to add to our store of fresh provisions! The river did not seem to me equal in beauty to the fair

Ohio; the shores were in many places low and swampy, to the great delight of the numberless Herons that moved along in gracefulness, and the grim Alligators that swam in sluggish sullenness. In going up a bayou we caught a great number of the young of the latter for the purpose of making experiments upon them.

“After sailing a considerable way, during which our commander and officers took the soundings, as well as the angles and bearings of every nook and crook of the sinuous stream, we anchored one evening at a distance of fully one hundred miles from the mouth of the river. The weather, although it was the 12th of February, was quite warm, the thermometer on board standing at 75° , and on shore at 90° . The fog was so thick that neither of the shores could be seen, and yet the river was not a mile in breadth. The ‘blind musquittoes’ covered every object, even in the cabin, and so wonderfully abundant were these tormentors, that they more than once fairly extinguished the candles whilst I was writing my journal, which I closed in despair, crushing between the leaves more than a hundred of the little wretches. Bad as they are, however, these blind musquittoes do not bite. As if purposely to render our situation doubly uncomfortable, there was an establishment for jerking beef on the nearer shores to the windward of our vessel, from which the breeze came laden with no sweet odours.

“In the morning when I arose, the country was still covered with thick fogs, so that although I could plainly hear the notes of the birds on shore, not an object could I see beyond the bowsprit, and the air was as close and sultry as on the previous evening. Guided by the scent of the jerkers’ works, we went on shore, where we found the vegetation already far advanced. The blossoms of the jessamine, ever pleasing, lay

steeped in dew; the humming bee was collecting her winter's store from the snowy flowers of the native orange; and the little warblers frisked along the twigs of the smilax. Now, amid the tall pines of the forest, the sun's rays began to force their way, and as the dense mists dissolved in the atmosphere, the bright luminary at length shone forth. We explored the woods around, guided by some friendly Live-oakers who had pitched their camp in the vicinity. After awhile the *Spark* again displayed her sails, and as she silently glided along, we espied a Seminole Indian approaching us in his canoe. The poor dejected son of the woods, endowed with talents of the highest order, although rarely acknowledged by the proud usurpers of his native soil, has spent the night in fishing, and the morning in procuring the superb-feathered game of the 'swampy thickets; and with both he comes to offer them for our acceptance. Alas! thou fallen one, descendant of an ancient line of freeborn hunters, would that I could restore to thee thy birthright, thy natural independence, the generous feelings that were once fostered in thy brave bosom. But the irrevocable deed is done, and I can merely admire the perfect symmetry of his frame, as he dexterously throws on our deck the trouts and turkeys which he has captured. He receives a recompense, and without smile or bow, or acknowledgment of any kind, off he starts with the speed of an arrow from his own bow.

"Alligators were extremely abundant, and the heads of the fishes which they had snapped off lay floating around on the dark waters. A rifle bullet was now and then sent through the eye of the largest, which, with a tremendous splash of its tail, expired. One morning we saw a monstrous fellow lying on the shore. I was desirous of obtaining him to make an accurate

drawing of his head, and, accompanied by my assistant and two of the sailors, proceeded cautiously towards him. When within a few yards, one of us fired and sent through his side an ounce ball, which tore open a hole large enough to receive a man's hand. He slowly raised his head, bent himself upwards, opened his huge jaws, swung his tail to and fro, rose on his legs, blew in a frightful manner, and fell to the earth. My assistant leaped on shore, and contrary to my injunctions, caught hold of the animal's tail, when the alligator, awakening from his trance, with a last effort crawled slowly towards the water, and plunged heavily into it. Had he thought of once flourishing his tremendous weapon there might have been an end of his assailant's life, but he fortunately went in peace to his grave, where we left him, as the water was too deep. The same morning, another of equal size was observed swimming directly for the bows of our vessel, attracted by the gentle rippling of the water there. One of the officers, who had watched him, fired and scattered his brain through the air, when he tumbled and rolled at a fearful rate, blowing all the while most furiously. The river was bloody for yards around, but although the monster passed close by the vessel, we could not secure him, and after awhile he sunk to the bottom.

“Early one morning I hired a boat and two men, with the view of returning to St. Augustine by a short cut. Our baggage being placed on board, I bade adieu to the officers, and off we started. About four in the afternoon we arrived at the short cut, forty miles distant from our point of departure, and where we had expected to procure a wagon, but were disappointed. So we laid our things on the bank, and, leaving one of my assistants to look after them, I set out, accompanied by the other, and my Newfoundland dog. We had

eighteen miles to go; and as the sun was only two hours high, we struck off at a good rate. Presently we entered a pine barren. The country was as level as a floor; our path, although narrow, was well beaten, having been used by the Seminole Indians for ages, and the weather was calm and beautiful. Now and then a rivulet occurred, from which we quenched our thirst, while the magnolias and other flowering plants on its banks relieved the dull uniformity of the woods. When the path separated into two branches, both seemingly leading the same way, I would follow one, while my companion took the other, and unless we met again in a short time, one of us would go across the intervening forest.

"The sun went down behind a cloud, and the south-east breeze that sprung up at this moment sounded dolefully among the tall pines. Along the eastern horizon lay a bed of black vapour, which gradually rose, and soon covered the heavens. The air felt hot and oppressive, and we knew that a tempest was approaching. 'Plato' was now our guide, the white spots on his skin being the only objects that we could discern amid the darkness, and, as if aware of his utility in this respect, he kept a short way before us on the trail. Had we imagined ourselves more than a few miles from the town, we would have made a camp, and remained under its shelter for the night; but, conceiving that the distance could not be great, we resolved to trudge along.

"Large drops began to fall from the murky mass overhead; thick impenetrable darkness surrounded us, and, to my dismay, the dog refused to proceed. Groping with my hands on the ground, I discovered that several trails branched out at the spot where he lay down; and when I had selected one, he went on. Vivid flashes of lightning streamed across the heavens, the

wind increased to a gale, and the rain poured down upon us like a torrent. The water soon rose on the level ground so as almost to cover our feet, and we slowly advanced, fronting the tempest. Here and there a tall pine on fire presented a magnificent spectacle, illumining the trees around it, and surrounded with a halo of dim light, abruptly bordered with the deep black of the night. At one time we passed through a tangled thicket of low trees, at another crossed a stream flushed by the heavy rain, and again proceeded over the open barrens.

“How long we thus, half-lost, groped our way is more than I can tell you; but at length the tempest passed over, and suddenly the clear sky became spangled with stars. Soon after we smelt the salt marshes, and walking directly towards them, like pointers advancing on a covey of partridges, we at last, to our great joy, descried the light of the beacon near St Augustine. My dog began to run briskly around, having met with ground on which he had hunted before, and taking a direct course, led us to the great causeway that crosses the marshes at the back of the town. We refreshed ourselves with the produce of the first orange tree that we met with, and in half an hour more arrived at our hotel. Drenched with rain, steaming with perspiration, and covered to the knees with mud, you may imagine what figures we cut in the eyes of the good people whom we found snugly enjoying themselves in the sitting room. Next morning Major Gates, who had received me with much kindness, sent a wagon with mules and two trusty soldiers for my companion and luggage.”

Availing himself of his letters again, he now went on board a revenue cutter, the *Marion*.

“As the *Marion* neared the inlet called Indian Key,

which is situated on the eastern coast of the peninsula of Florida, my heart swelled with uncontrollable delight. Our vessel once over the coral reef that everywhere stretches along the shore, like a great wall reared by an army of giants, we found ourselves in safe anchoring ground, within a few furlongs of the land. The next moment saw the oars of a boat propelling us towards the shore, and in brief time we stood on the desired beach. With what delightful feelings did we gaze on the objects around us!—the gorgeous flowers, the singular and beautiful plants, the luxuriant trees. The balmy air which we breathed filled us with animation, so pure and salubrious did it seem to be. The birds which we saw were almost all new to us; their lovely forms appeared to be arrayed in more brilliant apparel than I had ever before seen, and as they gamboled in happy playfulness among the bushes, or glided over the light green waters, we longed to form a more intimate acquaintance with them.

“Students of nature spend little time in introductions, especially when they present themselves to persons who feel an interest in their pursuits. This was the case with Mr Thruston, the deputy-collector of the island, who shook us all heartily by the hand, and in a trice had a boat manned at our service. Accompanied by him, his pilot, and fishermen, off we went, and after a short pull landed on a large Key. Few minutes had elapsed when shot after shot might be heard, and down came whirling through the air the objects of our desire. One thrust himself into the tangled groves that covered all but the beautiful coral beach that in a continued line bordered the island, while others gazed on the glowing and diversified hues of the curious inhabitants of the deep. I saw one of my party rush into the limpid element, to seize on a crab that with claws extended

upwards awaited his approach, as if determined not to give way. A loud voice called him back to the land, for sharks are as abundant along these shores as pebbles, and the hungry prowlers could not have got a more savoury dinner.

“The pilot, besides being a first-rate shot, possessed a most intimate acquaintance with the country. He had been a ‘conch-diver,’ and no matter what number of fathoms measured the distance between the surface of the water and its craggy bottom, to seek for curious shells in their retreat seemed to him more pastime than toil. Not a Cormorant or Pelican, a Flamingo, an Ibis, or Heron, had ever in his days formed its nest without his having marked the spot; and as to the Keys to which the Doves are wont to resort, he was better acquainted with them than many fops are with the contents of their pockets. In a word, he positively knew every channel that led to these islands, and every cranny along their shores. For years his employment had been to hunt those singular animals called Sea-cows or Manatees, and he had conquered hundreds of them, ‘merely,’ as he said, because the flesh and hide bring ‘a fair price’ at Havana. He never went anywhere to land without ‘Long Tom,’ which proved indeed to be a wonderful gun, and which made smart havock when charged with ‘groceries,’ a term by which he designated the large shot which he used. In like manner he never paddled his light canoe without having by his side the trusty javelin, with which he unerringly transfixed such fishes as he thought fit either for market or for his own use. In attacking turtles, netting or overturning them, I doubt if his equal ever lived on the Florida coast. No sooner was he made acquainted with my errand than he freely offered his best services, and from that moment until I left Key West, he was seldom out of my hearing.

“ While the young gentlemen who accompanied us were engaged in procuring plants, shells, and small birds, he tapped me on the shoulder, and, with a smile, said to me, ‘ Come along, I’ll show you something better worth your while.’ To the boat we betook ourselves, with the captain and only a pair of tars, for more he said would not answer. The yawl for a while was urged at a great rate, but as we approached a point the oars were taken in, and the pilot alone sculling, desired us to make ready, for in a few minutes we should have ‘ rare sport.’ As we advanced, the more slowly did we move, and the most profound silence was maintained, until suddenly coming almost in contact with a thick shrubbery of mangroves, we beheld, right before us, a multitude of Pelicans. A discharge of artillery seldom produced more effect,—the dead, the dying, and the wounded, fell from the trees upon the water, while those unscathed flew streaming through the air in terror and dismay. ‘ There,’ said he, ‘ did not I tell you so ; is it not rare sport ?’ The birds, one after another, were lodged under the gunwales, when the pilot desired the captain to order the lads to pull away. Within about half a mile we reached the extremity of the Key. ‘ Pull away,’ cried the pilot, ‘ never mind them on the wing, for those black rascals don’t mind a little firing ; now, boys, lay her close under the nests.’ And there we were, with four hundred Cormorants’ nests over our heads. The birds were sitting, and when we fired the number that dropped as if dead and plunged into the water was such, that I thought by some unaccountable means or other we had killed the whole colony. You would have smiled at the loud laugh and curious gestures of the pilot. ‘ Gentlemen,’ said he, ‘ almost a blank shot !’ And so it was, for on following the birds, as one after another peeped up from the water, we found only a few

unable to take to wing. 'Now,' said the pilot, 'had you waited until *I had spoken* to the black villains, you might have killed a score or more of them.' On inspection, we found that our shots had lodged in the tough dry twigs of which these birds form their nests, and that we had lost the more favourable opportunity of hitting them by not waiting until they rose. 'Never mind,' said the pilot, 'if you wish it, you may load the *Lady of the Green Mantle** with them in less than a week. Stand still, my lads; and now, gentlemen, in ten minutes you and I will bring down a score of them.' And so we did. As we rounded the island, a beautiful bird, of the species called Peale's Egret, came up and was shot. We now landed, took in the rest of our party, and returned to Indian Key, where we arrived three hours before sunset.

"The sailors and other individuals to whom my name and pursuits had become known, carried our birds to the pilot's house. His goodwife had a room ready for me to draw in, and my assistant might have been seen busily engaged in skinning, while George Lehman was making a sketch of the lovely isle.

"Time is ever precious to the student of nature. I placed several birds in their natural attitudes, and began to outline them. A dance had been prepared also, and no sooner was the sun lost to our eye, than males and females including our captain and others from the vessel, were seen advancing gaily towards the house in full apparel. The birds were skinned, the sketch was on paper, and I told my young men to amuse themselves. As to myself I could not join in the merriment, for, full of the remembrance of you, reader, and of the patrons of my work both in America and in Europe, I went on 'grinding'—

* The name given by the wreckers and smugglers to the *Marion*.

not on an organ, like the Lady of Bras d'Or, but on paper, to the finishing, not merely of my outlines, but of my notes respecting the objects seen this day.

"The room adjoining that in which I worked was soon filled. Two miserable fiddlers screwed their screeching silken strings—not an inch of catgut graced their instruments; and the bouncing of brave lads and fair lasses shook the premises to the foundation. One with a slip came down heavily on the floor, and the burst of laughter that followed echoed over the isle. Diluted claret was handed round to cool the ladies, while a beverage of more potent energies warmed their partners. After supper our captain returned to the *Marion*, and I, with my young men, slept in light swinging hammocks, under the eaves of the piazza.

"It was the end of April, when the nights were short and the days therefore long. Anxious to turn every moment to account, we were on board Mr. Thurstons' boat at three next morning. Pursuing our way through the deep and tortuous channels that everywhere traverse the immense muddy soap-like flats that stretch from the outward Keys to the Main, we proceeded on our voyage of discovery. Here and there we met with great beds of floating sea-weeds, which showed us that turtles were abundant there, these masses being the refuse of their feeding. On talking to Mr. Thurstons of the nature of these muddy flats, he mentioned that he had once been lost amongst their narrow channels for several days and nights when in pursuit of some smugglers' boat, the owners of which were better acquainted with the place than the men who were with him. Although in full sight of several of the Keys, as well as of the Mainland, he was unable to reach either, until a heavy gale raised the water, when he sailed directly over the flats, and returned home almost ex-

hausted with fatigue and hunger. His present pilot often alluded to the circumstance afterwards, ending with a great laugh, and asserting that 'had he been there, the rascals would not have escaped.'

"Coming under a Key on which multitudes of Frigate Pelicans had begun to form their nests, we shot a good number of them, and observed their habits. The boastings of our pilot were here confirmed by the exploits which he performed with his long gun, and on several occasions he brought down a bird from a height of fully a hundred yards. The poor birds, unaware of the range of our artillery, sailed calmly along, so that it was not difficult for 'Long Tom,' or rather for its owner, to furnish us with as many as we required. The day was spent in this manner, and towards night we returned, laden with booty, to the hospitable home of the pilot.

"The next morning was delightful. The gentle sea-breeze glided over the flowery isle, the horizon was clear, and all was silent save the long breakers that rushed over the distant reefs. As we were proceeding towards some Keys, seldom visited by men, the sun rose from the bosom of the waters with a burst of glory that flashed on my soul the idea of that Power which called into existence so magnificent an object. The moon, thin and pale, as if ashamed to show her feeble light, concealed herself in the dim west. The surface of the waters shone in its tremulous smoothness, and the deep blue of the clear heavens was pure as the world that lies beyond them. The Heron heavily flew towards the land, like the glutton retiring at day-break, with well-lined paunch, from the house of some wealthy patron of good cheer. The Night Heron and the Owl, fearful of day, with hurried flight sought safety in the recesses of the deepest swamps; while the Gulls and

Ferns, ever cheerful, gamboled over the water, exulting in the prospect of abundance. I also exulted in hope; my whole frame seemed to expand; and our sturdy crew showed, by their merry faces, that nature had charms for them too. How much of beauty and joy is lost to those who never view the rising sun, and of whose waking existence the best half is nocturnal!

"Twenty miles our men had to row before we reached 'Sandy Island,' and as on its level shores we all leaped, we plainly saw the southernmost Cape of the Floridas. The flocks of birds that covered the shelly beaches, and those hovering overhead so astonished us, that we could for awhile scarcely believe our eyes. The first volley procured a supply of food sufficient for two days' consumption. Such tales, you have already been told, are well enough at a distance from the place to which they refer; but you will doubtless be still more surprised when I tell you that our first fire among a crowd of the Great Godwits laid prostrate sixty-five of these birds. Rose-coloured Curlews stalked gracefully beneath the mangroves; Purple Herons rose at almost every step we took, and each cactus supported the nest of a White Ibis. The air was darkened by whistling wings, while, on the waters, floated Gallinules and other interesting birds. We formed a kind of shed with sticks and grass, the sailor-cook commenced his labours, and ere long we supplied the deficiencies of our fatigued frames. The business of the day over, we secured ourselves from insects by means of musquitto-nets, and were lulled to rest by the cacklings of the beautiful Purple Gallinules!

"When we had lain ourselves down on the sand to sleep, the waters almost bathed our feet; when we opened our eyes in the morning, they were at an immense distance. Our boat lay on her side, looking not

unlike a whale reposing on a mud-bank. The birds in myriads were probing their exposed pasture-ground. There great flocks of Ibises fed apart from equally large collections of Godwits, and thousands of Herons gracefully paced along, ever and anon thrusting their javelin bills into the body of some unfortunate fish confined in a small pool of water. Of Fish-Crows I could not estimate the number, but from the havoc they made among the crabs, I conjecture that these animals must have been scarce by the time of next ebb. Frigate Pelicans chased the Jager, which himself had just robbed a poor Gull of its prize, and all the Gallinules ran with spread wings from the mud-banks, to the thickets of the island, so timorous had they become, when they perceived us.

"Surrounded as we were by so many objects that allured us, not one could we attain, so dangerous would it have been to venture on the mud; and our pilot having assured us that nothing could be lost by waiting, spoke of our eating, and on this hint told us that he would take us to a part of the island where 'our breakfast would be abundant, although uncooked.' Off we went, some of the sailors carrying baskets, others large tin pans and wooden vessels, such as they used for eating their meal in. Entering a thicket of about an acre in extent, we found on every bush several nests of the Ibis, each containing three large and beautiful eggs, and all hands fell to gathering. The birds gave way to us, and ere long we had a heap of eggs that promised delicious food. Nor did we stand long in expectation, for, kindling a fire, we soon prepared, in one way or other, enough to satisfy the cravings of our hungry maws. Breakfast ended, the pilot, looking at the gorgeous sunrise, said 'Gentlemen, prepare yourselves for fun,—the tide is coming.'

“Over these enormous mud-flats, a foot or two of water is quite sufficient to drive all the birds ashore, even the tallest Heron or Flamingo, and the tide seems to flow at once over the whole expanse. Each of us provided with a gun, posted himself behind a bush, and no sooner had the water forced the winged creatures to approach the shore, than the work of destruction commenced. When it at length ceased, the collected mass of birds of different kinds looked not unlike a small haycock. Who could not with a little industry have helped himself to a few of their skins? Why, reader, surely no one as fond of these things as I am. Every one assisted in this, and even the sailors themselves tried their hand at the work.

“Our pilot, good man, told us he was no hand at such occupations, and would go after something else. So taking ‘Long Tom’ and his fishing-tackle, he marched off quietly along the shores. About an hour afterwards we saw him returning, when he looked quite exhausted, and on our inquiring the cause, said, ‘There is a dew-fish yonder and a few balacoudas, but I am not able to bring them, or even to haul them here; please send the sailors after them.’ The fishes were accordingly brought, and as I had never seen a dew-fish, I examined it closely, and took an outline of its form, which some days hence you may perhaps see. It exceeded a hundred pounds in weight, and afforded excellent eating. The balacouda is also a good fish, but at times a dangerous one, for, according to the pilot, on more than one occasion ‘some of these gentry’ had followed him when waist-deep in the water, in pursuit of a more valuable prize, until in self-defence he had to spear them, fearing that ‘the gentlemen’ might at one dart cut off his legs, or some other nice bit, with which he was unwilling to part.

Having filled our cask from a fine well long since dug in the sand of Cape Sable, either by Seminole Indians or pirates, no matter which, we left Sandy Isle about full tide, and proceeded homewards, giving a call here and there at different Keys, with the view of procuring rare birds, and also their nests and eggs. We had twenty miles to go 'as the birds fly,' but the tortuosity of the channels rendered our course fully a third longer. The sun was descending fast, when a black cloud suddenly obscured the majestic orb. Our sails swelled by a breeze that was scarcely felt by us, and the pilot requesting us to sit on the gunwale, told us we were 'going to get it.' One sail was hauled in and secured, and the other was reefed, although the wind had not increased. A low murmuring noise was heard, and across the cloud that now rolled along in tumultuous masses, shot vivid flashes of lightning. Our experienced guide steered directly across a flat towards the nearest land. The sailors passed their quids from one cheek to the other; and our pilot having covered himself with his oil-jacket, we followed his example. 'Blow, sweet breeze,' cried he at the tiller, 'and we'll reach land before the blast overtakes us, for, gentlemen, it is a furious cloud yon.'

"A furious cloud indeed was the one which now like an eagle on outstretched wings, approached so swiftly, that one might have deemed it in haste to destroy us. We were not more than a cable's length from the shore, when with imperative voice, the pilot calmly said to us, 'Sit quite still, gentlemen, for I should not like to lose you overboard just now; the boat can't upset, my word for that, if you will but sit still—here we have it.'

"Reader, persons who have never witnessed a hurricane, such as not unfrequently desolates the sultry climates of the south, can scarcely form an idea of their

terrific grandeur. One would think that, not content with laying waste all on land, it must needs sweep the waters of the shallows quite dry, to quench its thirst. No respite for an instant does it afford to the objects within the reach of its furious current. Like the scythe of the destroying angel, it cuts everything by the roots, as it were, with the careless ease of the experienced mower. Each of its revolving sweeps collects a heap that might be likened to the full sheaf which the husbandman flings by his side. On it goes with a wildness and fury that are indescribable; and when at last its frightful blasts have ceased, Nature, weeping and disconsolate, is left bereaved of her beauteous offspring. In some instances, even a full century is required, before, with all her powerful energies, she can repair her loss. The planter has not only lost his mansion, his crops, and his flocks, but he has to clear his lands anew, covered and entangled as they are with the trunks and branches of trees that are everywhere strewn. The bark overtaken by the storm, is cast on the lee-shore, and if any are left to witness the fatal results, they are the 'wreckers' alone, who, with inward delight, gaze upon the melancholy spectacle.

"Our light bark shivered like a leaf the instant the blast reached her sides. We thought she had gone over; but the next instant she was on the shore. And now in contemplation of the sublime and awful storm, I gazed around me. The waters drifted like snow; the tough mangroves hid their tops amid their roots, and the loud roaring of the waves driven among them, blended with the howl of the tempest. It was not rain that fell; the masses of water flew in a horizontal direction, and where a part of my body was exposed, I felt as if a smart blow had been given me on it. But enough!—in half an hour it was over. The pure blue sky once

more embellished the heavens, and although it was now quite night, we considered our situation a good one.

"The crew and some of the party spent the night in the boat. The pilot, myself, and one of my assistants, took to the heart of the mangroves, and, having found high land, we made a fire as well as we could, spread a tarpauling, and fixing our insect bars over us, soon forgot in sleep the horrors that had surrounded us.

"Next day, the *Marion* proceeded on her cruise and in a few more days, having anchored in another safe harbour, we visited other Keys, of which I will with your leave, give you a short account.

"The Deputy-Collector of Indian Isle gave me the use of his pilot for a few weeks, and I was the more gratified by this, that besides knowing him to be a good man and a perfect sailor, I was now convinced that he possessed a great knowledge of the habits of birds, and could without loss of time lead me to their haunts. We were a hundred miles or so farther to the south. Gay May, like a playful babe, gamboled on the bosom of his mother nature, and everything was replete with life and joy. The pilot had spoken to me of some birds which I was very desirous of obtaining. One morning therefore, we went in two boats to some distant isle where they were said to breed. Our difficulties in reaching that Key might to some seem more imaginary than real, were I faithfully to describe them. Suffice it for me to tell you, that after hauling our boats, and pushing them with our hands, for upwards of nine miles over the flats, we at last reached the deep channel that usually surrounds each of the mangrove islands. We were much exhausted by the labour and excessive heat, but we were now floating on deep water, and by resting a short while under the shade of some man

groves, we were soon refreshed by the breeze that gently blew from the Gulf. We further repaired our strength by taking some food; and I may as well tell you here, that during all the time I spent in that portion of the Floridas, my party restricted themselves to fish and soaked biscuit, while our only and constant beverage was water and molasses. I found that in these warm latitudes, exposed as we constantly were to alternate heat and moisture, ardent spirits and more substantial food would prove dangerous to us. The officers, and those persons who from time to time kindly accompanied us, adopted the same regimen, and not an individual of us had ever to complain of so much as a headache.

“But we were under the mangroves—at a great distance on one of the flats, the Heron, which I have named *Ardea occidentalis* was seen moving majestically in great numbers. The tide rose and drove them away, and as they came towards us, to alight and rest for a time on the tallest trees, we shot as many as I wished. I also took under my charge several of their young, alive.

“At another time we visited the ‘Mule Keys.’ There the prospect was in many respects dismal in the extreme. As I followed their shores, I saw bales of cotton floating in all the coves, while spars of every description lay on the beach, and far off on the reefs I could see the last remains of a lost ship, her dismantled hulk. Several schooners were around her; they were wreckers. I turned me from the sight with a heavy heart. Indeed, as I slowly proceeded, I dreaded to meet the floating or cast ashore bodies of some of the unfortunate crew. Our visit to the Mule Keys was in no way profitable, for, besides meeting with but a few birds, in two or three instances I was, whilst swimming

in the deep channel of a mangrove isle, much nearer a large shark than I wish ever to be again.

“‘The service’ requiring all the attention, prudence, and activity of Captain Day and his gallant officers, another cruise took place, of which you will find some account in the sequel; and, while I rest a little on the deck of the ‘Lady of the Green Mantle,’ let me offer my humble thanks to the Being who has allowed me the pleasure of thus relating to you, kind reader, a small part of my adventures.”

Admitted by Nature to her most tender confidences, the Hunter-Naturalist seems also to have been chosen as the favoured intimate of her convulsed and most terrible moods. We have seen him here ride unharmed amidst the hurricane of the Tropics, let us now turn to him standing secure “a looker-on,” beside its fearful track in the West. He thus describes the scene:—

“I had left the village of Shawney, situated on the banks of the Ohio, on my return from Henderson, which is also situated on the banks of the same beautiful stream. The weather was pleasant, and I thought not warmer than usual at that season. My horse was jogging quietly along, and my thoughts were, for once at least in the course of my life, entirely engaged in commercial speculations. I had forded Highland Creek, and was on the eve of entering a tract of bottom land or valley that lay between it and Canoe Creek, when on a sudden I remarked a great difference in the aspect of the heavens. A hazy thickness had overspread the country, and I for some time expected an earthquake, but my horse exhibited no propensity to stop and prepare for such an occurrence. I had nearly arrived at the verge of the valley, when I thought fit to stop near a brook, and dismounted to quench the thirst which had come upon me.

"I was leaning on my knees, with my lips about to touch the water, when, from my proximity to the earth, I heard a distant murmuring sound of an extraordinary nature. I drank, however, and as I rose on my feet, looked towards the south-west, where I observed a yellowish oval spot, the appearance of which was quite new to me. Little time was left me for consideration, as the next moment a smart breeze began to agitate the taller trees. It increased to an unexpected height, and already the smaller branches and twigs were seen falling in a slanting direction towards the ground. Two minutes had scarcely elapsed, when the whole forest before me was in fearful motion. Here and there, where one tree pressed against another, a creaking noise was produced, similar to that occasioned by the violent gusts which sometimes sweep over the country. Turning instinctively towards the direction from which the storm blew, I saw to my great astonishment, that the noblest trees of the forest bent their lofty heads for awhile, and, unable to stand against the blast, were falling into pieces. First, the branches were broken off with a crackling noise: then went the upper part of the massy trunks; and in many places whole trees of gigantic size were falling entire to the ground. So rapid was the progress of the storm, that before I could think of taking measures to insure my safety, the hurricane was passing opposite the place where I stood. Never can I forget the scene which at that moment presented itself. The tops of the trees were seen moving in the strangest manner, in the central current of the tempest, which carried along with it a mingled mass of twigs and foliage, that completely obscured the view. Some of the largest trees were seen bending and writhing under the gale; others suddenly snapped across; and many, after a momentary resistance, fell

uprooted to the earth. The mass of branches, twigs, foliage, and dust that moved through the air, was whirled onwards like a cloud of feathers, and on passing, disclosed a wide space filled with fallen trees, naked stumps, and heaps of shapeless ruins, which marked the path of the tempest. This space was about a fourth of a mile in breadth, and to my imagination resembled the dried-up bed of the Mississippi, with its thousands of planters and sawyers, strewn in the sand, and inclined in various degrees. The horrible noise resembled that of the great cataracts of Niagara, and as it howled along in the track of the desolating tempest, produced a feeling in my mind which it were impossible to describe.

“The principal force of the hurricane was now over, although millions of twigs and small branches, that had been brought from a great distance, were seen following the blast, as if drawn onwards by some mysterious power. They even floated in the air for some hours after, as if supported by the thick mass of dust that rose high above the ground. The sky had now a greenish lurid hue, and an extremely disagreeable sulphureous odour was diffused in the atmosphere. I waited in amazement, having sustained no material injury, until nature at length assumed her wonted aspect. For some moments I felt undetermined whether I should return to Morgantown, or attempt to force my way through the wrecks of the tempest. My business, however, being of an urgent nature, I ventured into the path of the storm, and after encountering innumerable difficulties, succeeded in crossing it. I was obliged to lead my horse by the bridle, to enable him to leap over the fallen trees, whilst I scrambled over or under them in the best way I could, at times so hemmed in by the broken tops and tangled branches, as almost to become

desperate. On arriving at my house, I gave an account of what I had seen, when, to my surprise, I was told that there had been very little wind in the neighbourhood, although in the streets and gardens many branches and twigs had fallen in a manner which excited great surprise.

“Many wondrous accounts of the devastating effects of this hurricane were circulated in the country, after its occurrence. Some log houses, we were told, had been overturned, and their inmates destroyed. One person informed me that a wire sifter had been conveyed by the gust to a distance of many miles. Another had found a cow lodged in the fork of a large, half-broken tree. But, as I am disposed to relate only what I have myself seen, I shall not lead you into the region of romance, but shall content myself with saying, that much damage was done by this awful visitation. The valley is yet a desolate place, overgrown with briars and bushes, thickly entangled amidst the tops and trunks of the fallen trees, and is the resort of ravenous animals, to which they betake themselves when pursued by man, or after they have committed their depredations on the farms of the surrounding district. I have crossed the path of the storm, at the distance of a hundred miles from the spot where I witnessed its fury; and, again, four hundred miles farther off, in the State of Ohio. Lastly, I observed traces of its ravages on the summits of the mountains connected with the Great Pine-Forest of Pennsylvania, three hundred miles beyond the place last mentioned. In all these different parts, it appeared to me not to have exceeded a quarter of a mile in breadth.”

But even this is not enough for Nature's child: he must be accepted playmate of the earthquake too, and calmly rock upon its waves. He tells us:—

“Travelling through the Barrens of Kentucky (of

which I shall give you an account elsewhere) in the month of November, I was jogging on one afternoon, when I remarked a sudden and strange darkness rising from the western horizon. Accustomed to our heavy storms of thunder and rain, I took no more notice of it, as I thought the speed of my horse might enable me to get under shelter of the roof of an acquaintance, who lived not far distant, before it should come up. I had proceeded about a mile, when I heard what I imagined to be the distant rumbling of a violent tornado, on which I spurred my steed, with a wish to gallop as fast as possible to the place of shelter; but it would not do: the animal knew better than I what was forthcoming, and, instead of going faster, so nearly stopped, that I remarked he placed one foot after another on the ground with as much precaution as if walking on a smooth sheet of ice. I thought he had suddenly foundered, and, speaking to him, was on the point of dismounting and leading him, when he all of a sudden fell agroaning piteously, hung his head, spread out his four legs, as if to save himself from falling, and stood stock still, continuing to groan. I thought my horse was about to die, and would have sprung from his back had a minute more elapsed; but at that instant all the shrubs and trees began to move from their very roots, the ground rose and fell in successive furrows, like the ruffled waters of a lake, and I became bewildered in my ideas, as I too plainly discovered that all this awful commotion in nature was the result of an earthquake.

“I had never witnessed anything of the kind before, although, like every other person, I knew of earthquakes by description. But what is description; compared with the reality? Who can tell of the sensations which I experienced, when I found myself rocking, as it were, on my horse, and with him moved to and fro, like a

child in a cradle, with the most imminent danger around, and expecting the ground every moment to open, and present to my eye such an abyss as might engulf myself and all around me? The fearful convulsion, however, lasted only a few minutes, and the heavens again brightened as quickly as they had become obscured; my horse brought his feet to their natural position, raised his head, and galloped off, as if loose and frolicking without a rider.

"I was not, however, without great apprehension respecting my family, from which I was yet many miles distant, fearful that where they were the shock might have caused greater havock than I had witnessed. I gave the bridle to my steed, and was glad to see him appear as anxious to get home as myself. The pace at which he galloped accomplished this sooner than I had expected; and I found, with much pleasure, that hardly any greater harm had taken place than the apprehension excited for my own safety.

"Shock succeeded shock almost every day and night for several weeks; diminishing, however, so gradually, as to dwindle away into mere vibrations of the earth. Strange to say, I for one became so accustomed to the feeling, as rather to enjoy the fears manifested by others. I never can forget the effects of one of the slighter shocks, which took place when I was at a friend's house where I had gone to enjoy the merriment that, in our western country, attends a wedding. The ceremony being performed, supper over, and the fiddles tuned, dancing became the order of the moment. This was merrily followed up to a late hour, when the party retired to rest. We were in what is called, with great propriety, a *log-house*, one of large dimensions, and solidly constructed. The owner was a physician; and in one corner were not only his lancets, tourniquets,

amputating-knives, and other sanguinary apparatus, but all the drugs which he employed for the relief of his patients, arranged in jars and phials of different sizes. These had some days before made a narrow escape from destruction, but had been fortunately preserved by closing the doors of the cases in which they were contained.

“As I have said, we had all retired to rest, some to dream of sighs and smiles, and others to sink into oblivion. Morning was fast approaching, when the rumbling noise that precedes the earthquake began so loudly as to waken and alarm the whole party, and drive them out of bed in the greatest consternation. The scene which ensued it is impossible for me to describe, and it would require the humorous pencil of Cruikshank to do justice to it. Fear knows no restraints. Every person, old and young, filled with alarm at the creaking of the log-house, and apprehending instant destruction, rushed wildly out to the grass enclosure fronting the building. The full moon was slowly descending from her throne, covered at times by clouds that rolled heavily along, as if to conceal from her view the scenes of terror which prevailed on the earth below. On the grass-plat we all met, in such condition as rendered it next to impossible to discriminate any of the party, all huddled together in a state of almost perfect nudity. The earth waved like a field of corn before the breeze; the birds left their perches, and flew about not knowing whither; and the doctor, recollecting the danger of his gallipots, ran to his shop-room, to prevent their dancing off the shelves to the floor. Never for a moment did he think of closing the doors, but, spreading his arms, jumped about the front of the cases, pushing back here and there the falling jars; with so little success, however, that before the shock was over, he had lost nearly all he possessed.

“The shock at length ceased, and the frightened females, now sensible of their dishabille, fled to their several apartments. The earthquakes produced more serious consequences in other places. Near New Madrid, and for some distance on the Mississippi, the earth was rent asunder in several places, one or two islands sunk for ever, and the inhabitants fled in dismay towards the eastern shores.”

Nor was it alone amidst the “elemental rack” that he thus seemed to bear a charmed life. He was threatened with another, and as stern, danger when once seeking shelter during his Western wanderings. This was when, returning from the upper Mississippi, he was forced to cross one of the wide prairies of that region. We must let him relate it in part. Toward the dusk of the evening, wearied with an interminable jaunt over the prairie, he approached a light that feebly shone from the window of a log-hut. He reached the spot, and, presenting himself at the door, asked the tall figure of a woman whether he might take shelter under her roof. Her voice was gruff, and her dress carelessly thrown about her person. She answered his question in the affirmative, when he walked in, took a wooden stool, and quietly seated himself by the fire. A finely formed young Indian, his head resting between his hands, with his elbows on his knees, was seated in the centre of the cabin. A long bow stood against the wall, while a quantity of arrows, and two or three black raccoon skins, lay at his feet. He moved not: he apparently breathed not. Being addressed in French, he raised his head, pointed to one of his eyes with his finger, and gave a significant glance with the other. His face was covered with blood. It appeared that, an hour before, in the act of discharging an arrow at a raccoon, the arrow slipt upon the cord, and sprang back

with such violence into his right eye, as to destroy it for ever. "Feeling hungry," Mr Audubon continues his narrative, "I inquired what sort of fare I might expect. Such a thing as a bed was not to be seen, but many large untanned bear and buffalo hides lay piled up in a corner. I drew a fine time-piece from my vest, and told the woman that it was late, and that I was fatigued. She had espied my watch, the richness of which seemed to operate upon her feelings with electric quickness. She told me that there was plenty of venison and jerked buffalo meat, and that on removing the ashes I should find a cake. But my watch had struck her fancy, and her curiosity had to be gratified with a sight of it. I took off the gold chain that secured it from around my neck, and presented it to her. She was all ecstasy, spoke of its beauty, asked me its value, put the chain around her brawny neck, saying how happy the possession of such a chain would make her. Thoughtless, and, as I fancied myself in so retired a spot, secure, I paid little attention to her talk or her movements. I helped my dog to a good supper of venison, and was not long in satisfying the demands of my own appetite. The Indian rose from his seat as if in extreme suffering. He pinched me on the side so violently that the pain nearly brought forth an exclamation of anger. I looked at him. His eye met mine; but his look was so forbidding, that it struck a chill into the more nervous part of my system. He again seated himself, drew a butcher-knife from its greasy scabbard, examined its edge as I would do that of a razor I suspected to be dull, replaced it, and again taking his tomahawk from his back, filled the pipe of it with tobacco, and sent me expressive glances whenever our hostess chanced to have her back toward us. Never till that moment had my senses been awakened to the danger which I now sus-

pected to be about me. I returned glance for glance with my companion, and rested well assured that, whatever enemies I might have, he was not of the number."

In the meantime, Audubon retired to rest upon the skins, when two athletic youths, the sons of the woman, made their entrance. She whispered with them a little while, when they fell to eating and drinking to a state bordering on intoxication. "Judge of my astonishment," he says, "when I saw this incarnate fiend take a large carving-knife, and go to the grindstone to whet its edge! I saw her pour the water on the turning-machine, and watched her working away with the dangerous instrument, until the sweat covered every part of my body, in spite of my determination to defend myself to the last. Her task finished, she walked to her reeling sons, and said,—'There, that'll soon settle him! Boys, kill yon ——; and then for the watch!' I turned, cocked my gun locks silently, and lay ready to start up and shoot the first who might attempt my life. Fortunately, two strangers entering at the moment, the purpose of the woman was disclosed, and she and her drunken sons secured."

But before and during this most erratic period of Audubon's long life of vicissitude and exposure, these same solitudes amidst which he wandered knew another shaggy presence even better than his own. The same earthquakes, the same hurricanes, and the same red foe, had beset the path of Daniel Boone,—and he, too, the rough, strong birth of nature, was a hunter-naturalist! Though his deeds and aims were not after the manner of those of Audubon, yet were they as grand, and their lives how much alike! These remarkable men—one the pioneer of Civilization and the other of Art and Science, in that great wilderness through which the path of

empire leads—did not meet until the career of each had been finally shaped, and then what grandeur was there in such meetings!

But we will trace rapidly the career of Boone up to these periods, and see how much resemblance in the outline of the gigantic proportions of these two men shall appear.

The great pioneer was born in 1746, and, though a native of Maryland, had lived as a hunter in two other States—Virginia and North Carolina—before he was twenty-three. Having reached eighteen, with rifle on shoulder, and hunting-knife at belt, he first set off alone for the wilds of Western Virginia. He left his parents behind, since he had found that they were not to be reconciled to the wild roving solitary life to which he had been so incurably addicted from the time he was strong enough to handle his little rifle. Since then, the woods had been his home and the father's house his camp,—though less and less frequently, as the years advanced, had it amounted even to so much of a tie.

It was not that the young Daniel was of either an ungentle or unloving nature that this apparent alienation and desertion occurred—the reverse is true, and his whole striking career has demonstrated him to have been the possessor of attributes as loyal and as generous as ever marked the man of great achievement. No, the instinct of freedom—freedom with God and nature—was as strong as life in him, and his tenacity of purpose as ungovernable as the law of gravitation.

His family was humble, and he had no educated purpose but what he had learned from the deep breathings of nature. What this purpose was he never stopped to think; he only felt yearnings, ungovernably strong, the meaning of which he could not know, but which led him, deeper and deeper, with yet more resistless

strength, into the cool profounds of the all-nourishing bosom of his primeval mother. Here was his learning—here he found a language with meanings enough to him, for each day had taught him to read with clearer and more unerring vision. He could not interpret this language, any more than he could the purpose with which his life was filled; but, as with that purpose, he would feel it in his being. About all that he knew definitely concerning himself was, that he always had been a hunter, and always should be a hunter; and, as for what might happen farther, he gave no other thought than for the day or the hour.

His spirit, even at lusty eighteen, with the eye of a hawk and the agility of a young panther, was not a turbulent one. He rebelled against the life of usages—that we call society—not because he lacked the strength or the firmness to battle with it, but because he lacked the will or desire to do so. He was too young and too healthy for misanthropy; and, if had been older and less healthy, the social conditions with which he was familiar were too simple for him to have realised that contamination of vice which sometimes goes far to breed distrust, disgust, and hate, in even strong natures.

No!—if ever a wild creature—gentle, and yet terrible in gentleness—went on two feet through the shadowed heart of forests, the young Boone was one! He knew nothing of any world but God's world—of any law but the right—of any conscience but his own—of any power but that which dwelt above—in nature, and in his own good right arm and unerring rifle.

In a word, he was the Patriarch of that "Wild Turkey breed" of tameless wanderers peculiar to this continent; and from the restless and wary instincts of which our progress towards almost boundless empire upon the hemisphere takes origin.

"He might have been civilized!" as a *gentleman* of Chestnut or Broadway—inspecting through an eye-glass his powerful frame and ruddy cheeks—may be supposed to lisp; but that would have spoiled a *man*!—a man of might!—the father of a state.

You could not have tamed such a man as Daniel Boone into the mere conventional slave, while there was "elbow-room," as he memorably termed it, in the world. If he had been chained, that dogged perseverance—that invincible self-reliance—that deathless love for the natural and the free, would have made him a most formidable galley-slave; under any institution he would have been a terrible agent of revolution and overthrow.

Indeed, one great cause of the solidity of our government at present is undoubtedly to be found in the fact, that our immense territories have as yet formed an outlet for such fierce unbending spirits, in the better work of pioneering, than the worse of *ementes*, as in hampered France. Crowd such natures too much, and the friction assuredly causes an explosion! They are too combustible to be trusted near the fires which rage beneath such cauldrons as Paris! Give them air and "elbow-room!" Cool them beneath the shadows of wide forests, and beside the rivulets that murmur, glistening here and there—or by the deep beds where mighty torrents roll and roar—then you make human beings of them, you temper down that savage restlessness of restraint which makes of them beasts and devils elsewhere. However stern the code their passions and necessities may cause them to adopt, yet it is sure to be based upon justice, and lead to wide utility. Society had always better let such men go—if they want to go—if it be even to "the farthest Ind"—for it is as sure in that event to hear of them again for

ultimate good as it is certain, if they are restrained, to feel them for immediate evil.

Young Boone passed through Virginia until he reached the wooded slopes, dark glens, and lofty cliffs of the Alleghany Mountains. Here at last it was lonely and wild enough for him. Here he felt was home and peace. Parts of this region were singularly picturesque and lovely, as they indeed still are. The fine open woods, heavily sodded with a rich and nutritious grass, afforded at that time the most abundant pasturage for great herds of deer, while now these lovely slopes are covered with large grazing farms, sustaining some of the finest cattle in the world.

The young adventurer soon built him a little hut in a ravine on the side of a mountain, about twenty miles beyond what he then supposed to be the outermost boundary of settlement. He then quietly proceeded to explore the region round about; pursuing industriously, in the meanwhile, his chosen vocation of hunter. This was at that time a far more honourable and lucrative employment than can well be realized now, for although very many devoted themselves to it as a means of earning an honest livelihood, and the skins and meat of the animals slain by them formed an important branch of traffic to the whole country, yet everybody was in addition more or less a hunter; so that, fortunately for our struggles then and since, this might be called the chief occupation of the people, and we a nation of hunters.

He went in to the nearest trading post now and then, laden with skins and meat, to exchange them for powder, lead, and other necessities, returning as speedily as possible, for the very atmosphere of even such "crowded haunts," was oppressive to him, and the coarse voices of common traffic sounded harsh enough to ears accustomed only to those of nature.

His lonely explorations were first directed towards the summits of the great chain. He would make excursions of weeks together along the wildest and most inaccessible sides of the mountains—penetrating their deepest fastnesses, and camping wherever the game or other objects of interest attracted him for a time—then he would *on* again to some newer and yet more difficult region within reasonable reach of his solitary cabin, and in a different direction.

Thus the whole year was unconsciously spent in scaling the eastern side of those mountains; the descent upon the western slope of which was to open to him a field of renown.

We next hear of him on the frontier of North Carolina. Here he lived for over a year in the most entire seclusion, never being seen except when he came in to the nearest settlement for powder and lead; and here he seemed still more shy than before, but yet his unusual energy as a hunter, his skill in wood-craft, and his cool, reckless presence of mind, under all circumstances of danger, soon attracted the admiration of the border men, and, in spite of his modesty and entire shrinking from all intercourse with his fellows that could be avoided, he found himself at twenty-one literally dragged forward into the position of a leader.

The frontier of North Carolina was at that time a good deal harassed by Indians, but principally by white ruffians and marauders who assumed the guise of Indians to perpetrate the most infamous outrages. From his knowledge of woodcraft, he was soon enabled to put a stop to this trick, and break down this dangerous combination. This gained him, in a still greater degree, the admiration of the borderers, and he was now regarded as a person of importance, and great confidence reposed in him, though so young a man.

Little was known, at this time, of the vast country beyond the Alleghanies to the west, but most especially of the wild and remote land of *Kan-tuck-Kee*, as it was termed, from its principal river, by the Indians.

It is true that so early as 1543, the Spaniards who penetrated the northern country under the chivalrous and unfortunate De Soto, discovered Kentucky while descending the Mississippi; that on the Ohio and Mississippi sides it had frequently been merely touched by the French Canadians, and by Jesuit missionaries, but it seems that a Colonel Wood, in 1654, was the first American who penetrated it so far as the Mississippi, through the interior.

In 1670, Captain Bolt visited it from Virginia, then the famous Jesuit, Father Hennepin, visited it in 1680. He is followed by Captain Tonti three years afterwards, who descended the Mississippi for the first time to its mouth, along with the famous Laselle. By the year 1739, the French Canadian traders had a regular trail through Kentucky by the Big Bone Lick. In 1750, Dr. Thomas Walker crossed the Alleghanies and explored to the Cumberland and Kentucky rivers; then James M'Bride, in 1754, descended to the mouth of the Kentucky river, and left his name there carved upon a beech-tree. But it was not until 1767 that the country could be said to have been really explored.

In this year a bold and enterprising man, who is only known as John Finley, with a small party of restless and reckless persons like himself, did penetrate the very heart of the land; and returning to North Carolina with the story of this new Eden, fired the spirit of adventure wherever he went.

By this time, young Boone had married the daughter of a brave and upright borderer. In 1769 he left his little family, and with this same John Finley for a

guide, and accompanied by a small party in addition, he set off for the new Dorado. His restless spirit yearned for solitudes more vast and wild than any he had yet known. It was only in the excitement of action, constant and unresting, that he could live.

From this time the history of the young hunter is well known. A little over one month, from the first of May to the seventh of June, 1769, the party of Boone, consisting of five men beside himself, arrived on what was then called Red River, after having crossed the mountains, and penetrated, on foot, full five hundred miles, the untracked wilderness. Here they formed a camp near where the guide, John Finley, had formerly camped when trapping and trading with the Indians on his last expedition.

They remained here for some time to recruit, and each day the young Boone wandered farther from the camp towards the west. He made an expedition of several days at last, and having found a much more convenient and lovely location, returned, broke up his camp, and moved on to this place.

From this camp he made even wider excursions than before, and it was upon one of these when, alone, he came out upon a mountain steppe, and saw stretched beneath him, far as eye could reach, the wondrous vision of Kentucky. Miles and miles away the fair and glorious land extended in flowery undulating plains, along which, here and there, stretched dark lines of heavy forest, above which, in thin squadrons, the pale morning mist was lifting slowly on the rising breath of odorous summer. It was a vision more rare than day dreams reveal to wild Utopian. The young hunter was overwhelmed. He lingered in rapturous musings until the night gathered, and then returned with a proud elastic step to the camp. He felt now, for the first

time, a fulness of content. Here was a space before him apparently illimitable, and *all* nature, nothing but nature! For the dangers he cared nothing, he was already familiar with, and fully prepared for them; and in the fulness of his joy, only looked forward to that vast unbroken quiet of the ancient wilds, that had so absorbed his life in its own stillness. He was no longer a youth now, but had become suddenly a man in this fruition, his life dream!

The camp was broken up next morning, and young Boone with his companions pushed on with great alertness to penetrate the new Eden, and explore its treasures. But poor Boone, who, in the eagerness of his new enthusiasm, urged on ahead of the rest of the party, in company with his favourite friend and companion, Stewart, was suddenly brought to a stand; for, surrounded by a large party of Indians, they were made prisoners as they carelessly ascended a steep hill. They were plundered, stripped, and bound of course, for the Shawanees who held that portion of Kentucky then, were not a little remarkable for their want of ceremony in such cases.

The tact of the consummate borderers now showed itself, and Boone and his companion feigned content, with such a quiet resignation, that the savages were entirely deceived, and gave them liberties which finally resulted in the desired opportunity of escape, and of which they skilfully availed themselves in time to get off. They found their camp broken and plundered, and, to their great dismay, that the rest of the party, having become frightened by the appearance of the Indians, had returned to North Carolina. This was a great shock to Boone, but his nature was far too resolute to be deterred at all from the prosecution of his fixed purpose at the outset, to explore and possess this whole region.

Soon after this, his brother, Squire Boone, joined them with a small supply of necessities, of which powder and shot were the most important.

John Stewart seems to have been a doomed man from the beginning, and his blood was to be the first offered up in the savage and unnatural struggle which was about to begin between the red man and his brother, the "long knife!" As yet only incidental traders, the Jesuit missionaries, the Canadian French, and a few explorers whom we have named, had penetrated here and there on the different sides of this lovely land, and had been met with that sort of surly endurance which characterizes, always, the first intercourse of the savage with the civilized trader or explorer. As yet no blood of the white man had been shed in Kentucky.

As Boone, his brother, and Stewart were traversing the forest this autumn, they were suddenly fired upon by a large party of Indians from a cane-brake, and Stewart fell, mortally wounded! Resistance was useless, and the brothers fled from the overwhelming force, and the scalping-knife which was drawn around poor Stewart's skull, opened, with its gory trophy, one of the most obstinate and bloody wars that ever occurred between two races.

Heretofore the most powerful aboriginal tribes of the north and the south had made Kentucky the common battle-ground. Taking the bloody wars between the Talegans and the Lenaps, with the branch of the grand and famous tribe of Natches in West Kentucky, and with the Sciotos in East Kentucky; then the later wars after the breaking up of the great Lenap confederacy, between the Senekas, the Mohawks, the powerful tribes of Menguys, Wyandots, etc., down to the time of the great Shawanee confederacy, and this

beautiful land of Kentucky had been the field and scene of all the darkest struggles; therefore it came to be called the "dark and bloody ground!"

Indeed, considering the tremendous struggle between the Ottawas and the Shawanees for supremacy, in which the former conquered, and uniting that with those which had preceded, and with the still more deadly and ferocious contest which—incident with the appearance of De Soto on the banks of the Mississippi—was precipitated here by the death of Stewart, I think Kentucky may truly be said to be entitled to the name.

The council-ground—the hunting-ground—the battle-ground of many nations—Kentucky may well feel that she has been "tried in the furnace!"—that she has a right to send forth some names of historic dignity—to have at least a place among her sisters! She does not boast of her heroes—*she only presents them!*

The two Boones were the only white men now left in this vast expanse of wilderness. They were cool and resolute persons; but it seemed a tremendous and almost infinite thing for them to be alone here, with the momentary prospect of collision with a foe who had just pronounced "war to the knife"—in the slaughter of Stewart; and, to make this more remarkable still, the brother of Boone returned for supplies—and with the purpose of bringing out all that was necessary, in the way of implements, for opening a settlement.

In the meantime, Daniel was left sole tenant of the wilderness. Think of it!—alone!—this single young man, with his rifle on shoulder, presuming to hold, "by right of possession," this great demesne against savage foes unnumbered. This dark rich earth had been coloured by the blood of many nations poured upon it. Why should it not continue the scene of desperate and memorable struggle?

Alone!—in his own proper self he stood, the sole representative of the great world he had left. The Romulus of Saxon blood, he was founding a new empire, and greater than he—was fed, not upon the “wolf’s milk,” but upon the abundance of mild and serene nature—upon the delicious esculence of her forest game, and fruits of her wild luxuriant vines.

With all his anxieties, he found repose here. He knew content to be where he was, at last, with none to rebuke him, none to say to him, nay.

His brother returned during the year, and they met at the camp where they had parted. The brave and noble brothers now explored the country more thoroughly, and to greater distances than before, as the younger had then brought in what was far more precious than silver and gold, powder and shot! The last of the year 1771, they returned for their families, having determined to remove to Kentucky. The renown of the young hunter and his discovery had now reached the settlements, and on the way back he was joined by forty stout hunters in Powell’s valley.

They had reached the interior, when the party was attacked by a large force of Indians, and six of their number killed. Their cattle were scattered, and indeed the whole party disorganized by this incident, and in spite of Boone’s exhortations, they persisted in returning upon their trail, and retreated to a settlement on the Clinch river.

Boone was indignant, and buried himself in the depths of the forest, leaving his family in the charge of the new settlement, and there remained alone, a hunter for four years, revisiting his family occasionally.

He had now become generally known as the *man* of the frontiers, and his reputation had filled the ear of authority, and, by the energetic Governor Spottswood, of

the State of Virginia at that time, he was employed in some surveys of importance, and from that period was considered the leading spirit of that part of the State territory.

In 1775, after numerous and important services to the government and the emigrants, who had begun to flock into the country from all sections, in small parties, he arrived at a salt spring or lick, with a scattered fragment of his party, which had been much cut up by the Indians, and commenced building a fort on the site of what is now termed Boonsborough. They were much annoyed by the Indians during this time, and one man was killed by them, but they suffered most from want of provisions. The indomitable courage of Boone overcame everything; he finished his fort, and soon after removed his wife and daughter to the stronghold—and now these two women stood alone by his side, the first who had crossed the mountains yet—the first white women who had yet stood upon the soil of Kentucky! The mother of a state stood now beside the daughter.

I cannot follow up with minuteness the further details of the life of this remarkable man. His story is the history of the birth of States in our progress towards the empire of the West. It is well known that so soon as Kentucky had grown, mainly under his fostering, to be able to take care of herself, and the smoke of his neighbour's cabin could be seen on the distant hills, the restless pioneer shouldered his rifle and pushed forward to find more room in the yet deeper and unviolated solitudes of Missouri.

But let us turn to Audubon's first meeting with him, as related by himself in his sketch of the progress of early settlement, and of the wild sports of Kentucky. He says:—

“Kentucky was formerly attached to Virginia; but

in those days the Indians looked upon that portion of the western wilds as their own, and abandoned the district only when forced to do so, moving with disconsolate hearts farther into the recesses of the unexplored forest. Doubtless the richness of its soil, and the beauty of its borders, situated as they are along one of the most beautiful rivers in the world, contributed as much to attract the old Virginians, as the desire so generally experienced in America, of spreading over the uncultivated tracts, and bringing into cultivation lands that have, for unknown ages, teemed with the wild luxuriance of untamed nature. The conquest of Kentucky was not performed without many difficulties. The warfare that long existed between the intruders and the Redskins was sanguinary and protracted; but the former at length made good their footing, and the latter drew off their shattered bands, dismayed by the mental superiority and indomitable courage of the white men.

“This region was probably* discovered by a daring hunter, the renowned Daniel Boone. The richness of its soil, its magnificent forests, its numberless navigable streams, its salt springs and licks, its saltpetre caves, its coal strata, and the vast herds of buffaloes and deer that browsed on its hills and amidst its charming valleys, afforded ample inducements to the new settler, who pushed forward with a spirit far above that of the most undaunted tribes, which for ages had been the sole possessors of the soil.

“The Virginians thronged towards the Ohio. An axe, a couple of horses, and a heavy rifle, with store of ammunition, were all that were considered necessary

* We have given the true account of the “Discovery” in the preceding sketch of Boone.

for the equipment of the man, who, with his family, removed to the new State, assured that, in that land of exuberant fertility, he could not fail to provide amply for all his wants. To have witnessed the industry and perseverance of these emigrants, must at once have proved the vigour of their minds. Regardless of the fatigue attending every movement which they made, they pushed through an unexplored region of dark and tangled forests, guiding themselves by the sun alone, and reposing at night on the bare ground. Numberless streams they had to cross on rafts, with their wives and children, their cattle and their luggage, often drifting to considerable distances before they could effect a landing on the opposite shores. Their cattle would often stray amid the rich pasturage of these shores, and occasion a delay of several days. To these troubles add the constantly impending danger of being murdered while asleep in their encampments, by the prowling and ruthless Indians; while they had before them a distance of hundreds of miles to be traversed before they could reach certain places of rendezvous called *Stations*. To encounter difficulties like these, must have required energies of no ordinary kind; and the reward which these veteran settlers enjoy was doubtless well merited.

“Some removed from the Atlantic shores to those of the Ohio in more comfort and security. They had their wagons, their negroes, and their families. Their way was cut through the woods by their own axemen the day before their advance, and when night overtook them, the hunters attached to the party came to the place pitched upon for encamping, loaded with the dainties of which the forest yielded an abundant supply, the blazing light of a huge fire guiding their steps as they approached, and the sounds of merriment that saluted their ears, assuring them that all was well. The

flesh of the buffalo, the bear, and the deer, soon hung in large and delicious steaks in front of the embers; the cakes, already prepared, were deposited in their proper places, and under the rich drippings of the juicy roasts, were quickly baked. The wagons containing the bedding, and, whilst the horses which had drawn them were turned loose to feed on the luxuriant undergrowth of the woods, some perhaps hobbled, but the greater number merely with a light bell hung to their neck, to guide their owners in the morning to the spot where they might have rambled, the party were enjoying themselves after the fatigues of the day.

“In anticipation all is pleasure; and these migrating bands feasted in joyous sociality, unapprehensive of any greater difficulties than those to be encountered in forcing their way through the pathless woods to the land of abundance; and although it took months to accomplish the journey, and a skirmish now and then took place between them and the Indians, who sometimes crept unperceived into their very camp, still did the Virginians cheerfully proceed towards the western horizon, until the various groups all reached the Ohio, when, struck with the beauty of that magnificent stream, they at once commenced the task of clearing land, for the purpose of establishing a permanent residence.

“Others, perhaps encumbered with too much luggage, preferred descending the stream. They prepared arks pierced with port-holes, and glided on the gentle current, more annoyed, however, than those who marched by land, by the attacks of the Indians, who watched their motions. Many travellers have described these boats, formerly called arks, but now named flat-boats. But have they told you, kind reader, that in those times a boat thirty or forty feet in length, by

ten or twelve in breadth, was considered a stupendous fabric; that this boat contained men, women, and children, huddled together, with horses, cattle, hogs, and poultry for their companions, while the remaining portion was crammed with vegetables and packages of seeds? The roof or deck of the boat was not unlike a farm-yard, being covered with hay, ploughs, carts, wagons, and various agricultural implements, together with numerous others, among which the spinning-wheels of the matrons were conspicuous. Even the sides of the floating mass were loaded with the wheels of the different vehicles, which themselves lay on the roof. Have they told you that these boats contained the little all of each family of adventurous emigrants, who, fearful of being discovered by the Indians under night, moved in darkness, groping their way from one part to another of these floating habitations, denying themselves the comfort of fire or light, lest the foe that watched them from the shore should rush upon them and destroy them? Have they told you that this boat was used, after the tedious voyage was ended, as the first dwelling of these new settlers? No, kind reader, such things have not been related to you before. The travellers who have visited our country have had other objects in view.

“I shall not describe the many massacres which took place among the different parties of white and red men, as the former moved down the Ohio; because I have never been very fond of battles, and, indeed, have always wished that the world were more peaceably inclined than it is; and shall merely add, that, in one way or other, Kentucky was wrested from the original owners of the soil. Let us, therefore, turn our attention to the sports still enjoyed in that now happy portion of the United States.

“We have individuals in Kentucky, kind reader, that even there are considered wonderful adepts in the management of the rifle. To drive a nail is a common feat, not more thought of by the Kentuckians than to cut off a wild turkey’s head, at a distance of a hundred yards. Others will bark-off squirrels one after another, until satisfied with the number procured. Some, less intent upon destroying game, may be seen under night snuffing a candle at the distance of fifty-yards, off-hand, without extinguishing it. I have been told that some have proved so expert and cool, as to make choice of the eye of a foe at a wonderful distance, boasting beforehand of the sureness of their piece, which has afterwards been fully proved when the enemy’s head has been examined!

“Having resided some years in Kentucky, and having more than once been witness of rifle sport, I shall present you with the results of my observation, leaving you to judge how far rifle-shooting is understood in that State.

“Several individuals who conceive themselves expert in the management of the gun, are often seen to meet for the purpose of displaying their skill, and betting a trifling sum, put up a target, in the centre of which a common sized nail is hammered for about two-thirds of its length. The marksmen make choice of what they consider a proper distance, which may be forty paces. Each man cleans the interior of his tube, which is called wiping it, places a ball in the palm of his hand, pouring as much powder from his horn upon it as will cover it. This quantity is supposed to be sufficient for any distance within a hundred yards. A shot which comes very close to the nail is considered as that of an indifferent marksman; the bending of the nail is, of course, somewhat better; but nothing less than hitting it right on

he head is satisfactory. Well, kind reader, one out of three shots generally hits the nail, and should the hooters amount to half a dozen, two nails are frequently needed before each can have a shot. Those who drive the nail have a further trial amongst themselves, and the two best shots out of these generally settle the affair, when all the sportsmen adjourn to some house, and spend an hour or two in friendly intercourse, appointing, before they part, a day for another trial. This is technically termed Driving the Nail.

“Barking-off squirrels is delightful sport, and in my opinion requires a greater degree of accuracy than any other. I first witnessed this manner of procuring squirrels, whilst near the town of Frankfort. The performer was the celebrated Daniel Boone. We walked out together, and followed the rocky margins of the Kentucky River, until we reached a piece of flat land thickly covered with black walnuts, oaks, and hickories. As the general mast was a good one that year, squirrels were seen gamboling on every tree around us. My companion, a stout, hale, and athletic man, dressed in a homespun hunting-shirt, bare-legged and moccasined, carried a long and heavy rifle, which, as he was loading it, he said had proved efficient in all his former undertakings, and which he hoped would not fail on this occasion, as he felt proud to show me his skill. The gun was wiped, the powder measured, the ball patched with six-hundred thread linen, and the charge sent home with a hickory rod. We moved not a step from the place, for the squirrels were so numerous that it was unnecessary to go after them. Boone pointed to one of these animals which had observed us, and was crouched upon a branch about fifty paces distant, and bade me mark well the spot where the ball should hit. He raised his piece gradually, until the bead (that being the

name given by the Kentuckians to the sight) of the barrel was brought to a line with the spot which he intended to hit. The whip-like report resounded through the woods and along the hills, in repeated echoes. Judge of my surprise, when I perceived that the ball had hit the piece of the bark immediately beneath the squirrel, and shivered it into splinters, the concussion produced by which had killed the animal, and sent it whirling through the air, as if it had been blown up by the explosion of a powder magazine. Boone kept up his firing, and, before many hours had elapsed, we had procured as many squirrels as we wished; for you must know, kind reader, that to load a rifle requires only a moment, and that if it is wiped once after each shot, it will do duty for hours. Since that first interview with our veteran Boone, I have seen many other individuals perform the same feat."

On another occasion he says—

"Colonel Boone happened to spend a night with me under the same roof, more than twenty years ago. We had returned from a shooting excursion, in the course of which his extraordinary skill in the management of the rifle had been fully displayed. On retiring to the room appropriated to that remarkable individual and myself for the night, I felt anxious to know more of his exploits and adventures than I did, and accordingly took the liberty of proposing numerous questions to him. The stature and general appearance of this wanderer of the western forests approached the gigantic. His chest was broad and prominent; his muscular powers displayed themselves in every limb; his countenance gave indication of his great courage, enterprise, and perseverance; and when he spoke, the very motion of his lips brought the impression that whatever he uttered could not be otherwise than strictly true. I undressed, whilst

he merely took off his hunting shirt, and arranged a few folds of blankets on the floor, choosing rather to lie there, as he observed, than on the softest bed. When we had both disposed of ourselves, each after his own fashion, he related to me the following account of his powers of memory, which I lay before you, kind reader, in his own words, hoping that the simplicity of his style may prove interesting to you."

"I was once," said he "on a hunting expedition on the banks of the Green River, when the lower parts of this State (Kentucky) were still in the hands of nature, and none but the sons of the soil were looked upon as its lawful proprietors. We Virginians had for some time been waging a war of intrusion upon them, and I, amongst the rest, rambled through the woods in pursuit of their race, as I now would follow the track of any ravenous animal. The Indians outwitted me one dark night, and I was as unexpectedly as suddenly made a prisoner by them. The trick had been managed with great skill; for no sooner had I extinguished the fire of my camp, and laid me down to rest, in full security, as I thought, than I felt myself seized by an indistinguishable number of hands, and was immediately pinioned, as if about to be led to the scaffold for execution. To have attempted to be refractory, would have proved useless and dangerous to my life; and I suffered myself to be removed from my camp to theirs, a few miles distant, without uttering even a word of complaint. You are aware, I daresay, that to act in this manner was the best policy, as you understand that by so doing, I proved to the Indians at once, that I was born and bred as fearless of death as any of themselves.

"When we reached the camp, great rejoicings were exhibited. Two squaws and a few papooses appeared particularly delighted at the sight of me, and I was as-

sured, by very unequivocal gestures and words, that, on the morrow, the mortal enemy of the Red-skins would cease to live. I never opened my lips, but was busy contriving some scheme which might enable me to give the rascals the slip before dawn. The women immediately fell asearching about my hunting-shirt for whatever they might think valuable; and, fortunately for me, soon found my flask filled with *monongahela* (that is, reader, strong whisky). A terrific grin was exhibited on their murderous countenances, while my heart throbbed with joy at the anticipation of their intoxication. The crew immediately began to beat their bellies and sing, as they passed the bottle from mouth to mouth. How often did I wish the flask ten times its size, and filled with aquafortis! I observed that the squaws drank more freely than the warriors; and again my spirits were about to be depressed, when the report of a gun was heard at a distance. The Indians all jumped on their feet. The singing and drinking were both brought to a stand, and I saw with inexpressible joy the men walk off to some distance and talk to the squaws. I knew that they were consulting about me, and I foresaw that in a few moments the warriors would go to discover the cause of the gun having been fired so near their camp. I expected that the squaws would be left to guard me. Well, sir, it was just so. They returned. The men took up their guns, and walked away. The squaws sat down again, and in less than five minutes had my bottle up to their dirty mouths, gurgling down their throats the remains of the whisky.

“ With what pleasure did I see them becoming more and more drunk, until the liquor took such hold of them that it was quite impossible for these women to be of any service. They tumbled down, rolled about, and began to snore: when I, having no other chance o

freeing myself from the cords that fastened me, rolled over and over towards the fire, and, after a short time, burned them asunder. I rose on my feet, stretched my stiffened sinews, snatched up my rifle, and, for once in my life, spared that of Indians. I now recollect how desirous I once or twice felt to lay open the skulls of the wretches with my tomahawk; but when I again thought upon killing beings unprepared and unable to defend themselves, it looked like murder without need, and I gave up the idea.

“But, sir, I felt determined to mark the spot, and walking to a thrifty ash sapling, I cut out of it three large chips, and ran off. I soon reached the river, soon crossed it, and threw myself deep into the cane-brakes, imitating the tracks of an Indian with my feet, so that no chance might be left for those from whom I had escaped to overtake me.

“It is now nearly twenty years since this happened, and more than five since I left the whites’ settlements, which I might probably never have visited again, had I not been called on as a witness in a law-suit that was pending in Kentucky, and which I really believe would never have been settled, had I not come forward, and established the beginning of a certain boundary line. This is the story, sir:—

“Mr. — moved from Old Virginia into Kentucky, and having a large tract granted to him in the new State, laid claim to a certain parcel of land adjoining Green River, and as chance would have it, took for one of his corners the very ash tree on which I had made my mark, and finished his survey of some thousands of acres, beginning, as it is expressed in the deed, ‘at an ash marked by three distinct notches of the tomahawk of a white man.’

“The tree had grown much, and the bark had

covered the marks; but, somehow or other, Mr. ——— heard from some one all that I have already said to you, and thinking that I might remember the spot alluded to in the deed, but which was no longer discoverable, wrote for me to come and try at least to find the place or the tree. His letter mentioned that all my expenses should be paid, and not caring much about once more going back to Kentucky, I started and met Mr. ———. After some conversation, the affair with the Indians came to my recollection. I considered for awhile, and began to think that after all I could find the very spot, as well as the tree, if it was yet standing.

“Mr. ——— and I mounted our horses, and off we went to the Green River Bottoms. After some difficulties, for you must be aware, sir, that great changes have taken place in those woods, I found at last the spot where I had crossed the river, and waiting for the moon to rise, made for the course in which I thought the ash tree grew. On approaching the place, I felt as if the Indians were there still, and as if I was still a prisoner among them. Mr. ——— and I camped near what I conceived the spot, and waited until the return of day.

“At the rising of the sun I was on foot, and after a good deal of musing, thought that an ash tree then in sight must be the very one on which I had made my mark. I felt as if there could be no doubt of it, and mentioned my thought to Mr. ———. ‘Well, Colonel Boone,’ said he, ‘if you think so, I hope it may prove true, but we must have some witnesses; do you stay here about, and I will go and bring some of the settlers whom I know.’ I agreed. Mr. ——— trotted off, and I, to pass the time, rambled about to see if a deer was still living in the land. But ah! sir, what a wonderful difference thirty years makes in the country! Why, at the time

when I was caught by the Indians, you would not have walked out in any direction for more than a mile, without shooting a buck or a bear. There were then thousands of buffaloes on the hills of Kentucky: the land looked as if it never would become poor; and to hunt in those days was a pleasure indeed. But when I was left to myself on the banks of Green River, I dare say for the last time in my life, a few *signs* only of deer were to be seen, and as to a deer itself, I saw none.

"Mr. ——— returned, accompanied by three gentlemen. They looked upon me as if I had been Washington himself, and walked to the ash tree, which I now called my own, as if in quest of a long-lost treasure. I took an axe from one of them, and cut a few chips off the bark. Still no signs were to be seen. So I cut again until I thought it was time to be cautious, and I scraped and worked away with my butcher-knife, until I *did* come to where my tomahawk had left an impression in the wood. We now went regularly to work, and scraped at the tree with care, until three hacks, as plain as any three notches ever were, could be seen. Mr. ——— and the other gentlemen were astonished, and, I must allow, I was as much surprised as pleased myself. I made affidavit of this remarkable occurrence in presence of these gentlemen. Mr. ——— gained his cause. I left Green River for ever, and came to where we now are; and, sir, I wish you a good night."

There are a thousand such characteristic anecdotes of Daniel Boone that might be given, but none of them would be so interesting in themselves, or possess such attraction as this, coming from the lips of such a narrator—for Boone was never more remarkable for the development of the curious instincts of woodcraft, than was Audubon himself—who of all men was best qualified to appreciate such phenomena in another.

Not long after his removal to Missouri, Boone calmly lay down and died in 1818; and, what is not the least extraordinary fact connected with his history, died poor! With all the opportunities his life had afforded him from the beginning, of amassing enormous wealth, by dealing in lands, the settlement of which he pioneered, he preferred a clear conscience and a stainless name, and only retained to the last what was his original inheritance—his rifle! Simple and generous hero—the turf of that wild distant grave must lie lightly on that broad and gentle bosom!

Audubon, too, as we know, is lately dead. But let us, before we pass to other themes, linger to look upon him once more at the moment, and in the scene, of what he considered the greatest triumph of his long life—his discovery of the Bird of Washington. He says—

“It was in the month of February, 1814, that I obtained the first sight of this noble bird, and never shall I forget the delight which it gave me. Not even Herschel, when he discovered the planet which bears his name, could have experienced more rapturous feelings. We were on a trading voyage, ascending the Upper Mississippi. The keen wintry blasts whistled around us, and the cold from which I suffered had, in a great degree, extinguished the deep interest which, at other seasons, this magnificent river has been wont to awake in me. I lay stretched beside our patroon. The safety of the cargo was forgotten, and the only thing that called my attention was the multitude of ducks, of different species, accompanied by vast flocks of swans, which from time to time passed us. My patroon, a Canadian, had been engaged many years in the fur trade. He was a man of much intelligence, and, perceiving that these birds had engaged my curiosity, seemed anxious to find some new object to divert me.

An eagle flew over us. 'How fortunate!' he exclaimed; 'this is what I could have wished. Look, sir! the Great Eagle, and the only one I have seen since I left the lakes.' I was instantly on my feet, and having observed it attentively, concluded, as I lost it in the distance, that it was a species quite new to me. My patroon assured me that such birds were indeed rare; that they sometimes followed the hunters, to feed on the entrails of animals which they had killed, when the lakes were frozen over, but that when the lakes were open, they would dive in the day-time after fish, and snatch them up in the manner of the Fishing Hawk; and that they roosted generally on the shelves of the rocks, where they built their nests, of which he had discovered several by the quantity of white dung scattered below.

"Convinced that the bird was unknown to naturalists, I felt particularly anxious to learn its habits, and to discover in what particulars it differed from the rest of its genus. My next meeting with this bird was a few years afterwards, whilst engaged in collecting crayfish on one of those flats which border and divide Green River, in Kentucky, near its junction with the Ohio. The river is there bordered by a range of high cliffs, which for some distance follow its windings. I observed on the rocks, which at that place are nearly perpendicular, a quantity of white ordure, which I attributed to owls that might have resorted thither. I mentioned the circumstance to my companions, when one of them, who lived within a mile and a half of the place, told me it was from the nest of the Brown Eagle, meaning the White-headed Eagle (*Falco leucocephalus*) in its immature state. I assured him this could not be, and remarked that neither the old nor the young birds of that species ever build in such places, but always in

trees. Although he could not answer my objection, he stoutly maintained that a brown eagle of some kind, above the usual size, had built there; and added that he had espied the nest some days before, and had seen one of the old birds dive and catch a fish. This he thought strange, having, till then, always observed that both Brown Eagles and Bald Eagles procured this kind of food by robbing the Fish-hawks. He said that if I felt particularly anxious to know what nest it was, I might soon satisfy myself, as the old birds would come and feed their young with fish, for he had seen them do so before.

“In high expectation, I seated myself about a hundred yards from the foot of the rock. Never did time pass more slowly. I could not help betraying the most impatient curiosity; for my hopes whispered it was a Sea-Eagle’s nest. Two long hours had elapsed before the old bird made his appearance, which was announced to us by the loud hissings of the two young ones, which crawled to the extremity of the hole to receive a fine fish. I had a perfect view of this noble bird, as he held himself to the edging rock, hanging like the Barn, Bank, or Social Swallow—his tail spread, and his wings partly so. I trembled, lest a word should escape from my companions. The slightest murmur had been treason from them. They entered into my feelings, and, although little interested, gazed with me. In a few minutes the other parent joined her mate; and, from the difference in size (the female of rapacious birds being much larger), we knew this to be the mother bird. She also had brought a fish; but, more cautious than her mate, she glanced her quick and piercing eye around, and instantly perceived that her abode had been discovered. She dropped her prey, with a loud shriek communicated the alarm to the male, and, hovering with

him over our heads, kept up a growling cry, to intimidate us from our suspected design. This watchful solicitude I have ever found peculiar to the female,—must I be understood to speak only of birds?

“The young having concealed themselves, we went and picked up the fish which the mother had let fall. It was a white perch, weighing about $5\frac{1}{2}$ lb. The upper part of the head was broken in, and the back torn by the talons of the Eagle. We had plainly seen her bearing it in the manner of the Fish-hawk.

“This day’s sport being at an end, as we journeyed homewards, we agreed to return the next morning, with the view of obtaining both the old and young birds; but rainy and tempestuous weather setting in, it became necessary to defer the expedition till the third day following, when, with guns and men all in readiness, we reached the rock. Some posted themselves at the foot, others upon it, but in vain. We passed the entire day, without either seeing or hearing an eagle, the sagacious birds, no doubt, having anticipated an invasion, and removed their young to new quarters.

“I come at last to the day which I had so often and so ardently desired. Two years had gone by since the discovery of the nest, in fruitless excursions; but my wishes were no longer to remain ungratified. In returning from the little village of Henderson, to the house of Dr. Rankin, about a mile distant, I saw an eagle rise from a small enclosure not a hundred yards before me, where the doctor had a few days before slaughtered some hogs, and alight upon a low tree branching over the road. I prepared my double-barrelled piece, which I constantly carry, and went slowly and cautiously towards him. Quite fearlessly he awaited my approach, looking upon me with undaunted eye. I fired, and he fell. Before I reached him, he was dead. With what

delight did I survey the magnificent bird! Had the finest salmon ever pleased him as he did me? Never. I ran and presented him to my friend, with a pride which they alone can feel, who, like me, have devoted themselves from their earliest childhood to such pursuits, and who have derived from them their first pleasures. To others I must seem to 'prattle out of fashion.' The doctor, who was an experienced hunter, examined the bird with much satisfaction, and frankly acknowledged he had never before seen or heard of it.

"The name which I have chosen for this new species of Eagle, 'The Bird of Washington,' may, by some, be considered as preposterous and unfit; but as it is indisputably the noblest bird of its genus that has yet been discovered in the United States, I trust I shall be allowed to honour it with the name of one yet nobler, who was the saviour of his country, and whose name will ever be dear to it. To those who may be curious to know my reasons, I can only say that, as the New World gave me birth and liberty, the great man who insured its independence is next to my heart. He had a nobility of mind, and a generosity of soul, such as are seldom possessed. He was brave, so is the eagle; like it, too, he was the terror of his foes; and his fame, extending from pole to pole, resembles the majestic soarings of the mightiest of the feathered tribe. If America has reason to be proud of her Washington, so has she to be proud of her Great Eagle.

"In the month of January following, I saw a pair of these eagles flying over the Falls of the Ohio, one in pursuit of the other. The next day I saw them again. The female had relaxed her severity, had laid aside her coyness, and to a favourite tree they continually resorted. I pursued them unsuccessfully for several days, when they forsook the place."

Stay yet, too, while we note this fine expression of the agonized travail of genius in the productions of its mighty works. It is from the introduction to his fifth and concluding volume of the "Ornithological Biography."

"How often have I longed to see the day on which my labours should be brought to an end! Many times, when I had laid myself down in the deepest recesses of the western forest, have I been suddenly awakened by the apparition of dismal prospects that have presented themselves to my mind. Now sickness, methought, had seized me with burning hands, and hurried me away, in spite of all fond wishes, from those wild woods in which I had so long lingered to increase my knowledge of the objects they presented to my view.

"Poverty, too, at times, walked hand in hand with me; and, on more than one occasion, urged me to cast away my pencils, destroy my drawings, abandon my journals, change my ideas, and return to the world. At other times, the red Indians, erect and bold, tortured my ears with horrible yells, and threatened to put an end to my existence; or white-skinned murderers aimed their rifles at me. Snakes, loathsome and venomous, entwined my limbs, while vultures, lean and ravenous, looked on with impatience. Once, too, I dreamed, when asleep on a sand-bar on one of the Florida Keys, that a huge shark had me in his jaws, and was dragging me into the deep.

"But my thoughts were not always of this nature; for, at other times, my dreams presented pleasing images. The sky was serene, the air perfumed, and thousands of melodious notes from birds, all unknown to me, urged me to rise and go in pursuit of those beautiful and happy creatures. Then I would find myself furnished with large and powerful wings; and, cleaving

the air like an eagle, I would fly, and by a few joyous bounds, overtake the objects of my desire. At other times, I was gladdened by the sight of my beloved family, seated by their cheerful fire, and anticipating the delight which they would experience on my return. The glorious sun would rise, and as its first rays illuminated the earth, I would cheer myself with the pleasing prospect of the happy termination of my labours, and hear in fancy the praises which kind friends would freely accord. Many times, indeed, have such thoughts enlivened my spirits; and now the task is accomplished. In health and in sickness, in adversity and prosperity, in summer and winter, amidst the cheers of friends and the scowls of foes, I have depicted the birds of America, and studied their habits as they roamed at large in their peculiar haunts."

That concluding passage is far nobler than "*Veni, vidi, vici!*" as the simple expression of a proud, triumphant consciousness; for, instead of the intense egotism which renders that repulsive as it is celebrated, this is modest and severely classic. What a day that was when he could say, "I find my journeys all finished, my anxieties vanished, my mission accomplished!" What a magnificent perspective could he look back through, down the past, more glorious than all royalties, than any heritage of earthly princes—and all his own! That day has now come in the fulness of time—and, glorious old man, thy mission is indeed accomplished!

CHAPTER III.

THE GRAVE OF THE SILENT HUNTER.

The wilds of Kentucky—Hunting in the snow—Backwoodsmen—Bear-hunting—Backwood superstitions—The grave of the silent hunter—Studying Phrenology in the wilderness—The “bumps” of a hunter.

MY native town, Hopkinsville, is in one of the southern counties of Kentucky, called Christian, which was for a long time one of the largest, if not the largest, county in the State. This was no special matter of boast, by the way; for although the southern portion, comprising about half the county which bordered upon the Tennessee line, was as rich, level, and lovely a stretch of “barrens” as ever swayed its myriad wild flowers of countless hues beneath the laboured beat of the south wind’s odour-burdened wings, yet immediately to the north of the county-seat—Hopkinsville—the whole character of the county changed at once. While five miles to the south was a paradise of flowers, or when cultivated, covered with crops of Indian corn ten and fifteen feet in height; tobacco with leaves often three feet by two; and wheat, five to six feet; the same distance to the north brought you amidst rugged hills of sand or clay, that barely yielded the most meagre subsistence to the poor and simple inhabitants, who necessarily remained hunters. Their rifles supplied them with that provision which the ungrateful earth refused to yield to the plough and the hoe. As you penetrated

further in this direction, the country became wilder and more broken at every turn of the narrow trail, until, even so late as twelve years ago, you came upon a country quite as wild and savagely unaltered as when the Indian war-whoop alone disturbed its echoes. Here your trails cease, and as you push into this formidable-looking wilderness, which reaches to Green River—over forty miles—you shudder at the tremendous solitudes of its abrupt cliffs, that take away your breath when you come suddenly upon the verge of their deep gorges, winding far away, black with the “Bottom Forests,” except where some stream that has leaped with a sullen roar from beneath you down the cliff, gleams sharply out from the shadow here and there; or when, in the distance, some huge “Pilot Knob” lifts its bare, conical crown so high into the hazy heavens, that it seems like one of old Nilus’ Pyramids, set above the hills! The scene here is indeed inexpressibly shaggy, wild, and stern. These Pilot Knobs, of which there are two, are very famous in the early annals of Kentucky; and we may have more to say of them. They constitute the most peculiar features of this singular scenery, and there are many legends connected with them. Here the Indians lingered longest after being driven from their northern possessions, or hunting grounds rather; and here the raging hate of the two races spent itself in the last desperate collisions, before sullen conqueror or conqueror could agree to part. Here the game lingered too, and still lingers, and must continue to linger for many a year to come; though what was once sole possession of the fierce, swarthy Shawanee, is now periodically intruded upon by the pale sons of the lordly planters of the tobacco lands to the south, who are accustomed to make up, yearly, “camping parties” to hunt in this region for a few weeks during the fall of the year.

Along the southern border of the rougher part of this wilderness, there are a few cabins of the race of hunters who belong to the times of Boone, and still boast that they continue to "hold their own," which means, being still "out of sight of the smoke of a neighbour's chimney!" It would indeed be rather a difficult feat to see this same smoke, it must be confessed, since the nearest neighbour is probably twelve miles off, and both their huts embosomed in steep crags!

I have never been a lover of, what they term so expressively in the West, "a crowd," particularly on hunting excursions; the chief charm of which has consisted in the entire separation from my race, permitted for the time, and the solitude that invites a refreshing communion with the primitive forms of the natural world. Many's the time have I forgotten to shoot, and let the stately deer go by unscathed, while I stood breathless to admire its graceful action, and the charming unity of its antlered presence here, with the swaying of old boughs and lapsing leap of streams. With such moods upon me, I could not bear to hurt the lovely creatures; it seemed as though a voice of our mother nature chid me: "Shame! shame! to slay the beautiful!"

But I was usually as keen a hunter as ever startled the ancient echoes with the rifle's shrilly ring. My boon companion at this time, some twelve years ago, was, like myself, named Charles, or Charlie M., as he was everywhere called, from his merry, reckless, jovial character. Now Charlie *was* a character, sure enough, and just such an one you will meet with nowhere else in the world but in Kentucky; and even there it is nearly grown out by this time. A more loyal, gentle, and generous spirit never lived, nor did a truer heart beat ever in the broad, roomy chest of a lion-man. He was as merrily reckless as a prodigious flow of physical energies, mirthful in-

instincts, and indomitable courage could make him. He always took sides with the weak, it mattered not to him what the odds of the oppressor, or how strange both parties might be to him. He carried this feeling to amusing extremes in the defence of domestic animals; and many the scrape he has got into by taking the part of a poor horse or dog that was being cruelly beaten by a drunken beast of a master. He would never pass such a scene without stopping it, at all hazards to himself; he would never see a negro beaten, and never struck his own, but resented it as a personal injury to himself if another did. This man was the most passionately devoted to the chase of any one I had ever yet met with. His father had been very wealthy, and at the time he grew up, at Frankfort, the capital of Kentucky, the chase was the one fashionable and absorbing pursuit of the young men of his social rank. The greater part of his life was thus spent in the saddle; and a passion cultivated from boyhood is not easily shaken off in early manhood, particularly one so fascinating. Suffice it, he kept a splendid pack of hounds, the genealogy of every one of which he had at his tongue's end; and some fine hunters in his stable; and for years after I knew him—when he moved to the south—near my native town—he spent fully one-third of his time, night and day, in the woods on horseback following his hounds. He, too, was a genuine lover of Nature, and preferred to hunt alone. Charlie was, indeed, the very impersonation of a class of gay, dashing, reckless, and accomplished sportmen of the north of Kentucky, which is now nearly extinct. Whether, mounted on his tall and powerful hunter, that seemed almost a miracle of indomitable game and speed, he went sweeping through the thick, primitive woods at a pace that would have terrified any other sportsman on the open ground, clearing at flying leaps the most extra-

vagant perils, without notice, and always close with the chase, cheering in ringing halloes his noble hounds; or, on our long rides to the distant hunting grounds by night, carrying chorus to some wild hunting song in the shrill blasts of his curled bugle, he was still the splendid and consistent ideal of the north-Kentucky fox-hunter of the generation following Clay and Crittenden!

We soon knew each other; and, as there were many points of earnest congeniality between myself and the wild hunter, we soon became frequent and inseparable companions, particularly on the long hunts to this rude region I have described.

It was now the last of November that we started with hound and horn for the hills, on the grand hunt of the year. A snow storm had commenced over night, and none but a true hunter can realize the bounding delight with which the first snow storm is welcomed. Then only comes his enjoyment in highest perfection! Now the game of every kind is not only within his reach, but is in its highest condition. He can himself trace it for miles and miles away through the deep snow, until, brought to bay at last, it falls before his unerring aim. He has an exulting consciousness of his independence, even of his dogs, for nothing can escape his practised eye and tireless patience. The most exciting of all hunts are proverbially those in the snow; but in the northern States they become disgusting very soon, as they quickly degenerate into the merest butcheries, where the snow, from three to four feet, remains upon the ground for three or four months, with a crust over it just strong enough to bear a man on snow shoes, or his dog, and yet will let in the poor animal at every jump as deep as it can sink. Here it is like slaughtering sheep in a pen, when hunters attack a "yard" of deer or moose; but in Kentucky the case is very dif-

ferent. The snow seldom or never falls deeper than two feet, and most frequently does not last a week. It never crusts sufficiently to impede, materially, the progress of large game, and all the sport is therefore confined to within the first few days; and the principal, if not only, advantage the hunter gains, consisting in the increased facility with which the game is traced, either by himself or by the noses of his hounds. This makes the sport intensely exciting, for you sometimes pursue a single herd or sole animal for twenty miles before you get a shot; but as you are sure to get a glimpse of them, and hear their whistling snort of defiance as they bound on again every half hour or so, you are kept in a constant state of excitement, and beguiled, without heeding, over miles and miles that would otherwise have been weary enough to you. It is only when the coveted achievement has been really accomplished, and you have proudly thrown your noble quarry across the saddle, that you begin to realize fatigue in satiety, and self-reproach in the fatigue, as with aching limbs you turn your wearied horse through the strange, darkening woods towards the distant camp. Now the chill night wind whistles through the gnarled boughs, dashes the frozen snow in fine, sifted, searching particles into your face and bosom; now your hot blood chills and your fiery pulse sinks; the cutting nor'-wester searches the very "marrow of annoy;" and with sinking heart and shivering limbs, its very shadow as the owl sails by, causes your teeth to chatter, and its sudden hoot makes you almost leap from the saddle in nervous affright. Now, as the dreary way lengthens before you, the cheerful light of the solitary camp-fire seems far, far away, and an almost infinite distance of bog and bluff, of crag, ravine, and tangled wood, seems stretched between you and that warm haven; then it is that conscience speaks

through the downcast life, and we are forced to realize the brutal savagery of this miscalled "sport;" we have a foretaste of the aches and pains of the poor animals we have been chasing through the deep snow all day, already in our own chafed and suffering limbs, with the sure knowledge that the fruition is not yet, but must come when we rise sore, stiff, and shivering, from, perhaps, a frozen couch in the morning. Ah, how the weary miles do stretch! It is in vain that a few spasmodic notes are sounded upon the curled bugle at our side; the echoes take on such stunning reverberations amongst the bare cliffs, that we are awed into silence! How many vows against cruelty to animals, against the indulgence of such tiger-passions, are muttered as our despair gathers with exhaustion. The moon wheels up her glittering disc, and at another time we should have been wild with delight to watch the glory of the shine her coming lays along the sparkling earth, and through the dark armed trees; but now, alas! it only taunts with its splendour; it cannot make the way more short! On, on we plunge; the miles grow longer, and the noble horse begins to stagger beneath his double load, and then the shuddering apprehension comes that he may give out, and leave us to trudge the live-long night through the snow to keep from freezing. If the fatal sleep overtake us, we must lie down and die, with our poor horse for a pillow, and the filmed eyes of the noble buck we slew fixed in a stonied gaze upon our own as they are glazed by the cold wind. Maddened by such horrid images, and nerved by despair, we raise the bugle to our stiffened lips once more; loud, long and high the peal rings out, shrill as a death-cry. My sagacious horse has stopped of his own accord, holding his breath, while with pricked ears he listens. Hark! that faint distant sound! Is it echo? He stamps his foot with an impatient neigh, and

with blazing eyes and erect crest springs forward. No more staggering now,—fatigue is gone; it requires all my exhausted strength to hold him within anything like a moderate gait. A half hour, and with an eager neigh he breaks into a run, under my not unwilling rein, for I, too, have caught a glimpse of a fire through the wood, and recognize the white face of yonder cliff, with the moon full upon it; and in another minute, with the warm blood rushing to my heart and brain, and a mad whoop of delight, I burst into the light of the camp-fire to be welcomed by the yells and combined howls of a dozen hounds, and a hearty cheer from the gallant Charlie!

Now the scene has changed, and by the warm fire and over the smoking roast of tenderest venison, the feats of the day are recounted with as much eager zest as if there had been no such thing as cold, fatigue, and nervous apprehensions. The terrors have all vanished within the charmed circle of that fire-light, and we throw ourselves upon our blankets to sleep, dreaming lustily of just such scenes to be gone through to-morrow; only the dreams somehow give only the bright side of the picture, and manage to leave out all about freezing to death, starvation, etc. So sunrise would find us with appetites only sharpened by the sufferings of the day before, and yet more ready to do full justice to the roast or living venison. Such are the strange inconsistencies of the hunter's moods, and such the charms of the vivid shifting excitements of his restless and tumultuous life! He is one moment worse than the most ferocious wild beast, and the next his head is turned aside to weep that he has slain "a thing of beauty," fresh from God's own hands. It was thus our lives had fared, in camp and out, for four or five days, when the weather changing suddenly, the snow commenced to disappear rapidly.

Our sport in the snow was now over; but we were not by any means satisfied, and Charlie proposed that we should strike our camp and make our way across the ridges to the hut of a famous hunter known along this border as Old Jake,—what his other name was he had never heard, though he had been at his hut several times. He said the old fellow would be very glad to see us, and would furnish us with a “hill boy,” whom he kept in his employ, to act as a guide and driver for us. We intended now to change our mode of hunting. We were to be placed by the driver at different “stands,” as they are called, meaning places at which, from his knowledge of the country, he knew the deer always passed out when roused by the dogs from their feeding-grounds. After placing us, he was to return along the ridge for a mile or so with the dogs, and then descending into the bottom, with sound of horns, yells of dogs, and other noises, drive the frightened creatures before him to our stands. We found everything at Old Jake’s as Charlie expected. We were received with true hunter hospitality by the family; consisting of the old man, his tanned and wrinkled dame, with two stout and comely daughters, who were the very impersonations of buxom good humour.

We had a merry time of it the first evening, and the next morning, early, were joined by our guide that was to be. He was a droll-looking specimen, surely! Lank, long, and lantern-jawed, he looked as if the fever and ague of the country bottoms had, in shaking him into a bag of bones, forgotten to joint him again when he was set up; yet, withal, it was marvellous to see the cadaverous-looking creature making his way over these rugged hills, far in advance of our active horses, while with every long stride his loose limbs actually seemed to be wrapping round each other. He was called Jabe, as I

suppose short for Jabez, and carried a very long specimen of the old-fashioned rifle of our fathers. It was easy enough to see that he was a fine marksman, from the sharp, steady shine of his black eyes beneath the long, coarse, Indian-like hair that hung over them; indeed, I half suspected that the fellow was a half-breed, but had no opportunity of ascertaining. We had evidence enough of this afterwards. Placing ourselves with implicit faith under the patronage and guidance of this remarkable personage, we met with "sport" to satiety at last, within two days.

We had gone out as usual on the third, and in a different direction from any we had yet tried. The spot assigned me for a stand by Jabe was by far the most remarkable I had yet seen. Five miles back, we had, with considerable difficulty, climbed up the steep side of a lofty and wooded ridge, that seemed much higher than any one we had yet seen. We had found the top, or comb, apparently level; though as we rode on, I observed the surrounding country to be either sinking beneath the feet of the ridge, or else the ridge was rising rapidly above the country. Suddenly we came to the sheer verge of a precipice three hundred feet in depth, and the heavy forest below us looked almost like lichens clinging to stones, which were in reality considerable bluffs. The thing was so sudden that our horses reared backwards and snorted with affright. It seemed as if the ancient basin of some ocean lay at our feet, stretching as far as the eye could reach on either hand and in front; while far away to the right, just under the rim of the horizon, we could distinguish the dark, heavy line of the wood bordering Green River; while to the left it shut down upon a blue serrated line of lofty Knobs. We were lost in wonderment, gazing over this extraordinary scene,

hen Charlie suddenly shouted as he turned his head quickly :—

“Hilloa, there!—you Jabe—where are you making f to, you tallow-skinned knave?—you havn’t shown e my stand yet!”

But Jabe either did, or pretended not to hear, and ly increased the celerity of his gait, as he went crash- g through the brush down the steep ridge side, without urning his head, even. Charlie was highly enraged, and estowed upon him sundry expletives not of the choicest ection, but which it is hardly necessary to repeat. I ughed heartily at the incident, and Charlie at once rgot his wrath in a loud burst of merriment, when I ecalled to his recollection the droll way in which our uide had acted for the last mile. He had been up to at time striding just ahead of our horses, gossiping in e gayest possible of saturnine humours, asking us all orts of unsophisticated questions about the ways of the e settlements,” and telling us quaint anecdotes about ld Jake, who was the greatest man in the world, ac- ording to his estimation. Indeed, he had been keeping e in one continued roar of laughter at his simplicity, ad a certain shrewdness combined, when suddenly a ew thought seemed to have struck him. He had aused for an instant,—looked around him furtively, ad then drawing towards the left hand side of the dge, had, from that time, commenced bearing down at side further and further, until when we had nearly eached this spot, he pointed here, without a word, and e next we saw of him he was “splitting it” down the dge.

“You remember, Charlie, we could get nothing, not e word, out of him, with all your merciless rallying, fter he made that sudden stop! Depend upon it, there e some fun in this; and that fellow has got this bluff-

point somehow mixed up in the ridiculous superstition common to his class!"

After many merry comments upon this text, in the course of which, with our loud talking and laughter, we violated all the accepted rules of "driving," which require, peremptorily, the most profound silence on the part of the "stander" as he approaches his "stand," we came to the conclusion, that, as the mischief had no doubt already been done, and the deer turned back by the sound of our voices, we had just as well take it easy until the driver came in. So, seating or rather stretching ourselves upon some mossy boulders, scattered around, we chatted away the next half hour very cozily although an occasional eddy of the wind would bring up to our ears the distant babble of the hounds in the valley, and the long, mellow wail of the driver's horn both showing the game was on foot; yet neither of us rose even, so entirely had we become cloyed of this sport! Soon the full chorus of hounds burst upon us seemingly close at hand, still neither of us rose. Suddenly we heard a heavy crashing through the underbrush, and before we had time to think, an enormous black bear rushed past us.

"Hah! new game!" I exclaimed, as we both sprang to our feet, and fired our rifles after the unwieldy brute. It was evidently hit, but kept on with undiminished speed across the ridge. The dogs, with bristles erect and savage yells, came pouring after, while we, thus unexpectedly aroused to the wildest excitement, shouted like madmen as we followed after on foot, loading our guns while we ran. We knew the bear was wounded and would take to the first large tree it came to. The comb of the ridge was about a quarter of a mile wide here, and the ground a general level. We heard the dogs baying furiously now.

"He's tree'd already!" chuckled Charlie. "Let's approach cautiously."

We feared it might resort to its common trick when tree'd by the dogs; seeing the hunters approach, it rolls itself up into a ball, and dropping to the ground, makes off again. We, however, managed to get fair shots, and brought it down. It was a very large animal of the species, and we wound a merry blast, both loud and long, in honour of our unexpected triumph. We supposed that the sound of the guns and the recall of the horns would, of course, bring our faithful esquire, Jabe, to us. After listening for some time, and no answer, Charlie gave another louder and longer blast, with all the power of his lungs, and receiving no answer still, sent out his prodigious voice over the valley, with a force that filled it with reverberations. After listening a moment, we could barely distinguish a feeble "too-oot! toot!" that seemed to come from no great distance, but what the direction might be, neither of us could tell; for Jabe, as it undoubtedly was, must surely have been stretched upon the ground in some hiding-place. I laughed heartily.

"Why, Charlie, that fellow is frightened out of his wits by some ghost story,—we must get along without him."

"More like the bear has scared him into a fit—the spindle-shanked hill-tyke!" growled Charlie, who was excessively wroth for a few minutes, but whose risibles could not withstand the slightest allusion on my part to that dolorously timid "too-oot! toot!" We accordingly went to work, in despair of any assistance from the redoubtable Jabe, and prepared our meat for transportation homeward. We had reached our horses, and while engaged in dividing the burden between them, who should come crawling cautiously towards us, out of the wood,

but our gentleman of the asthmatic horn. As soon as Charlie saw him, he staggered in convulsions of laughter and letting his burden fall, rolled over and over upon the leaves, scarcely able to articulate more than a word or two at a time.

"O Jabe! O Jabe!—the bear! the bear!—run, Jabe the bear!—what'll Uncle Jake say, Jabe?—run, Jabe the bear!"

Jabe, in the meantime, was very coolly examining the bear, while his eyes fairly glistened at the sight of the fat, heavy hams.

"Gosh! he's a whopper! Killed jest sich a old 'un down in the truck-patch back er Uncle Jake's 'bout this time last winter. I was out choppin', and he com' snuffin' at a hog-bone I'd brung out for a bite, and didn't seem to mind me,—so I stood still, and he kinde come too close at last, and I let him hev it across the nose! One lick turned him up, sir,—sure as a gun!"

I now remembered having heard Uncle Jake refer to this feat of Jabe—but it had been done incidentally, and in such a matter-of-course sort of a way, that I had not noticed it specially at the time. The simple way in which the young hunter now recalled it, and the enthusiasm which lit his eye the moment he saw our unwonted quarry, convinced me that Charlie had been entirely mistaken, and that there must be some other cause than the one he assigned for the evident alarm of a man who had already, and with such coolness, killed a full-grown bear with an axe only. I accordingly let Charlie have his laugh out; for he had no notion of listening to any but his own version of the affair, while I determined to take advantage of the garrulous excitement caused in the mind of Jabe by the sight of this the most valued of all the game of the country, to draw out from him the real cause of his alarm. So we sat

down on the ground, to examine the bear more at our leisure, and winking at Charlie, I at last got him to comprehend something of my purpose. We drew Jabe out as to his hunting feats in general,—but most especially with regard to those in this particular neighbourhood. Gradually he seemed to forget himself, and, watching the moment, I asked him, suddenly, if he had ever taken a “stand” here, where he had placed us, himself.

“I!” he exclaimed, with a look of amazement; “I great jingo—no! I wouldn’t er tuck a ‘stand’ on this here pint fer all the bear on the Tennessee and Cumberland put together!”

“But why not, Jabe?—we’ve seen nothing very wrong here!”

“O, you’re strangers!—but didn’t *he* swar before he died that the fust hunter, as ought’er know, that com’d near enough that big black oak to see the little head-stone to his grave, that he meant to haunt him to death? Didn’t he?—I tell you this aint the boy that would go in a hundred yards of that big oak on no consideration in natur.”

“But,” said I, impatiently, “Jabe, who was this person?”

“Why, Old Bill Smith—to be sure! You never hearn of Old Bill Smith? Why, Uncle Jake know’d him well—he’s fit Injuns with him many a time; everybody down in these parts know’d him!”

“No doubt, Jabe; but you say he’s buried under the big black oak. Was he buried there of his own wish?”

“In course!—they say he chose the place years before he died, and fixed the grave himself. Them as buried him say it’s a mighty curius sort o’ grave. He was one of Boone’s men, and so was Uncle Jake,—and Uncle Jake helped three more on ’em to bury him.

There 'aint bin a livin' soul belongin' round here since He lived by himself more 'n two years, down by the big spring. That's since I ken recollect. He never spoke to nobody but our Uncle Jake, and we never seed him more 'n three times a year, when he com'd in to git the powder an' lead Uncle Jake had got for him."

"Now, Jabe," said I, in my most wheedling tone "Jabe, my good fellow, won't you show us the grave?"

"I!—good!—why, man, no!—not for all the money in your town!"

"But, Jabe, you need only go near enough to show us the tree; you will not be violating the command in doing that merely."

He still continued to shake his head dubiously, in spite of our united entreaties, and mutter,—

"Golly!—don't like this here ridge, anyhow,—don't think it's safe,—wish hadn't bin sich a dratted fool as to come this way;—forgot till I was most there!"

But Charlie and I—in whom the spirit of mischief on his part, and earnest curiosity on mine, had now been thoroughly roused—determined to give poor Jabe no time for consideration, and plied him on both sides with such eagerness, that, after a considerable degree of wavering and hesitation, we at last brought him up to the sticking point by the application of a few shiners to his palm. He started, though still with visible trepidation, to lead us to the grave. I could scarcely keep from giving way to my inclination to laugh again as I watched the various expressions of dread, mingled with the most spasmodic efforts to express a courageous and devil-may-care sort of air, which were becoming more and more forlorn as we approached the scene of his apprehensions.

We had not walked more than a few hundred yards almost immediately along the edge of the cliff, when he

stopped, and, pointing ahead to a very large black oak tree that stood somewhat apart from the more stunted growth of the ridge, and within a few feet of the precipitous verge we had been treading, said in a tremulous tone,—

“Thar!—that’s the tree!—wouldn’t go any closer for a kingdom!”

“Well, Jabe, you’ll wait here, won’t you?” said I, as we walked on.

“’Spose I will—don’t like it, though!”

We laughed slightly as we looked back.

The moment the tree had been pointed out to us, I had remarked to Charlie, that I thought I recognised that tree; and when we reached it, judge our astonishment, to find it was the very one from which we had shot the bear a few hours before: and on looking round, we perceived what had, during the excitement of the chase and conquest, entirely escaped our attention before, namely, that this was really the largest tree in sight, and that it stood exactly on the highest point of the ridge, and commanded a wider prospect than was possible from any other spot. These observations interested us not a little, and I looked around curiously for traces of the grave. Directly, Charlie uttered an exclamation.

“Here it is! I suppose this must be it—though it’s a droll-looking affair for a grave!”

I stepped towards him, and found him kneeling on the bluff-side of the tree close to its roots, and peering between some flat rocks which he had partly uncovered of the mould and leaves.

“These flat rocks seem to be regular—this must be the sepulchre, coffin, or whatever you choose to call it!” he continued, as he scratched away. “By Jove! look through that crack—I can see the skull!”

I knelt beside him, and sure enough a human skull was visible in the shallow sarcophagus. I immediately proposed to remove the stone, and take the skull out. I was at the time a vehemently ardent student of the new science of Gall and Spurzheim, and would cheerfully have risked my life for any such opportunity as this for examining the skull of a man whose character must evidently have been so very marked and extraordinary. It was no vulgar curiosity that caused me to disregard the slight remonstrance of Charlie, who muttered something about the pity to disturb the old fellow's rest. I reverently lifted the thin flat stone, about eighteen inches in length by six in breadth, which lay across the grave over the head, and could then see the structure of the whole as well as a great portion of the skeleton.

The grave was only about eighteen inches deep by about the same in width, and was lined bottom and sides with flat unhewn stones of the same size as that I had taken from over the head, and the rest of the cover was the same, as well as the head-stone, which stood an inch and a half above the surface. I immediately recognised the sort of stone sarcophagus or grave, which is to be found in thousands, covering sometimes miles of ground in the southern part of Kentucky and portions of Tennessee. The people adopting this curious mode of sepulture were extinct at a period earlier than the remotest reach of the tradition of the present *aboriginal* races, as we *vainly* enough call them. I have often examined these graves where you could not make a step for miles but upon one. They were evidently those of a pigmy race, for they averaged not more than three feet in length. It was from these ancient burial-grounds that the old hunter had obtained his idea of sepulture. Who this singular people were, will prob-

ably never be satisfactorily discovered. In the meantime, men of sense will continue to laugh at the absurd theory, that these are the burying grounds of the Aztecs for their children. They must have been very accommodating children to die by the thousand just about three feet high!

After examining the interior, without disturbing the limbs and body, I proceeded to lift the skull tenderly in my hand. I now stood erect, holding it off from me to study its proportions—when a sudden yell so startled me that I was near dropping it in the shock. I looked around quickly; Jabe uttering a second yell of horror, was in the act of throwing his long rifle from him—then bending his head forward, and fighting desperately about his ears, as if attacked by a whole nest of hornets, he bounded with another wild screech into the thicket, and, as far as I could hear him, he seemed to give a screech for each bound. I turned an inquiring look upon Charlie, who was rolling upon the leaves half dead with smothered laughter.

“Has he got into a yellow jacket’s nest, Charlie!” I inquired very soberly of the ridiculous fellow, for I did not feel much like laughing.

“No,” he gasped at last; “but if you don’t look out you will have got into one, by that phrenological whim of yours. Jabe saw you with the skull in your hand, and it frightened him to death almost. You may rest assured that he will not stop now until every man in the circumference of twenty miles knows of this. There are not many of them, to be sure, but they will be troublesome fellows to deal with.”

“Well, what would you advise, Charlie?”

“Why, that we both make a bee-line for home, right off! I think I can find the way out, and it’s no use meeting these fellows while they are exasperated. We’ll

return in a few weeks, when the thing has passed over; and as I have no hand in it, I'll make your peace with the superstitious fools, and we can have our hunt out, and hear Uncle Jake's story of this Bill Smith!"

"Well, I'm agreed—but stop a few moments, Charlie. As I have risked a lynching to get a sight of the old hunter's skull—I am going to have a good look at it now before we go!"

He uttered some exclamation of impatience, and sunk down upon the leaves again, when I was soon deep in the mystery of bumps.

I marvelled at that head! The skull was of rather small size, and ran up at firmness almost to a cone—secretiveness was enormous, too, and destructiveness quite as excessive—but combativeness was not large—adhesiveness, benevolence, and conscientiousness, remarkably large. Of acquisitiveness he seemed to have nothing scarcely, and of what is called human nature, a great deal. He had prominent language, yet one of his sobriquets was, the "Silent Indian killer!" Of causality there was little—but comparison was large—the organs between the eyes were large—form, locality, etc. Philoprogenitiveness was the largest organ, except firmness!

These were the hasty observations I had time to make before the impulsive hurry of my comrade compelled me to replace the skull. This was done with the most scrupulous care, in exactly the position from which I had taken it as possible. The grave was also re-covered with the same care, and restored as nearly as I could get it to the condition in which I found it. We soon after mounted our horses, with the bear meat tied behind us, and set off rapidly on our return to town. During the whole ride I was thinking of this extraordinary head, and what had no doubt been its equally remarkable owner. What a man this must have been, and

what a career!—for, obscure as it appeared to have been, it was evident from the awe and dread his very bones inspired in the mind of the simple hunter, that he must have possessed traits while living, quite as peculiar as his taste in burial, or the shape of his head. What circumstances could have combined to drive one of his naturally strong and active social feelings into the terrible isolation of life and of death, in which I had thus far traced him!

Come what might, I vowed that at some future time I would make another effort to clear up this mystery of the “Hunter’s Grave,” and trace the story of this saturnine old warrior of the dark and bloody ground.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SILENT HUNTER.

Early days of William Smith—A hard Master—Love and Learning—an Escape—Wanderings and Privations—A real Friend—Retribution—Studies Law—Success as a Pleader—Marriage—Progress in Life—Patriotism, and consequent losses—"Westward, ho"—An Indian Massacre—Vengeance.

I CARRIED out my first resolution, to get all that could be reached concerning the history of Bill Smith. On a new excursion, I saw and made my peace with Uncle Jake—the one of his old comrades who had most of his confidence, and who lived nearest to the concluding scenes of his life. My friend Charlie and myself spent a week with him this time, and we were even successful, after the first day, in reconciling to us our old acquaintance and guide, Jabe, in spite of the terrible fright we had given him through my phrenological enthusiasm. Jabe seemed to have come, finally, to the logical conclusion, that, as the ghost had not yet ridden us into our graves, that it meant to let us off, on the score of our being green-horns, "who didn't know no better!"

"But fur a *hunter*, who ought'er know'd sumthin, to do sich a thing—it would'er been more 'an his life or his sleep o' nights war worth!"

Without pretending to dispute the metaphysical views of Jabe, we proceeded as usual to avail ourselves of his really uncommon skill as a guide and driver, while I made it a point when we returned from the day's hunt, and when the evening meal had given way

to pipes and cigars, to bring old Uncle Jake round, by indirections, to the topic of which he was most shy, while I was most eager, namely, the story of this Bill Smith—for the more I heard of him the more curious the contradictions of his character appeared.

So far as I can make out the story, he seems to have been an orphan boy, thrown upon the charities of the kind world when quite young, by the sudden death of parents, whose only child he was, and who had lately come over with a ship-load of other emigrants from Old England.

It was not to be expected that a child with such an unfortunate patronymic as Smith, was ever to be inquired after. He was lost in the undistinguishable and innumerable multitude of that great family. Of course his fate was apprenticeship under the system of indenture which prevailed quite generally among the colonies. We hear of him as indentured to an old farmer in the northern part of Carolina. He must have been eight years old or thereabouts at this time.

This old farmer, I suspect, was a veritable brute; for although the terms of indenture, besides a sufficiency of food and clothing, together with comfortable lodgings, expressly stipulated that the apprentice, thus bound for a term of years, for and in consideration of his services, was to be afforded the opportunity and allowed the necessary time for the acquisition of a good common school education,—this part of his bond and duty, it seems, the old curmudgeon never did or would fulfill, thinking, I suppose, that learning was only one of the worldly vanities, and would most likely turn the boy's head. William seems to have been, from the beginning, remarkable more for wilfulness than any other trait; and I suppose it was quite as much because old Saunders refused to send him to school as from any inherent

love of learning, that he determined to learn to read anyhow.

Little blue-eyed Mattie Saunders, who seemed a stray angel by the fireside of him who called her child, somehow or other divined the wishes and purpose of the young Smith; and as her excellent mother had taken care to teach her to read as soon as she could speak, from a sort of melancholy presentiment that she had not long to tarry with her, she proved a very capable and certainly remarkably successful instructress. Certain it is, that if he did not take to learning for learning's own sweet sake altogether, there proved to be a most salutary attraction in that little white and dumpy finger, gliding from letter to letter, to fix the attention of the wilful and headstrong boy.

He made such rapid progress that he soon became the teacher of his young mistress in turn; and as this relation between the young ones had to be kept scrupulously private, the pleasures of such stolen intercourse were greatly heightened.

This condition of things, charming enough, no doubt, to both parties, was most unpleasantly broken up by the accidental discovery of its existence by the old man, who, it seems, was furious thereat, and from that time commenced a series of petty and abominable persecutions, which almost drove the forlorn and wretched child mad.

The gentle consolations which he had heretofore received from sweet little Mattie, were now denied him. He was banished, in mid-winter, to the barn to sleep on the hay, with only a single thin and tattered blanket to cover his shivering body.

The heroic boy bore all this for eighteen months without a murmur, and all for the sake of his little mistress, with whom, in spite of the vigilance of the

father, he managed to obtain occasional interviews, in which, with many tears on both sides, the testimonials of their pure and innocent affection were hurriedly exchanged.

Old Saunders had but the one child; and having amassed a considerable fortune by the most parsimonious and usurious practices, he was constantly haunted by the apprehension, even in her childhood, that every one who approached little Mattie did so with an eye to her money.

He therefore watched her most jealously, and cut her off as much as possible from all intercourse with the outward world—even in the distant perspective of womanhood the idea of her marriage and a dower was almost death to him. To part with any portion of his precious and ill-gotten gold, was like wringing the drops of his heart-blood upon the thirsty sands. He at once became furious the moment he discovered the little childish sympathy between the boy Smith and his daughter. There was no knowing what such a thing might come to; and the starveling, whom he flattered himself he had apprenticed out of charity, might prove the viper upon his hearth.

Such were the barbarities practised upon the helpless orphan, that, although too manly himself ever to complain, they became the talk of the neighbourhood; and, while some persons openly asserted that old Saunders was trying to kill the boy by inches, others had determined to have him presented to the next Grand Inquest that sat in the county, for barbarity and neglect of duty.

Before, however, this very necessary and proper step could be taken, these persecutions had grown beyond any further possibility of endurance, and in a fit of ungovernable despair, the miserable child made up his rags

into a little bundle, in which he also secreted a few scraps of food, which little Mattie, to whom he had made known his purpose, had obtained for him. He then crept into her little room by the window at night, and after weeping long, as if their little hearts would burst—in each other's arms—for each felt that this parting was from the only friend they had in the world—the poor boy comforted the tender mourner by assuring her, in a tone of singular confidence, that when he got to be a great man he was going to come back for her and make her his little wife.

Even at the early age of thirteen the remarkable magnetic power which afterwards distinguished the man, was developed—for, in relating this occurrence himself in after-life, he said that when he spoke this in a bold, confident tone, the little trembler ceased to weep, and looking up into his face with a smile, said—

“Well, then, you may run along, Billy—I'll wait for you!”

He was off in an instant, and with her last pure kiss upon his lips, he plied his little legs as fast as they could carry him on the road which he had learned led to the capital of the State. His heart was light, his spirit bold, and the great world before him a shrouded mystery. He reached Raleigh in about a week, begging his way after his own little store gave out. He must have exhibited a great deal of audacity and address, for a child of his age, to have succeeded in getting through such a journey without being stopped by the authorities somewhere on the way. However, it is not more remarkable than many other of the events of his life.

After reaching Raleigh, his life was of course wretchedly precarious for some time. He prowled about the kitchens of the gentry at meal times, and lived upon such scraps from the tables as the negroes

chose to throw him in compassion—at night he crawled into some shed or stable to shiver in the straw till morning.

It happened that a kind-hearted old judge of the circuit court—Campbell by name—who was a very early riser, and always went, the first thing, to see how the cattle and horses came on, found one morning a feeble-looking child, with features ghastly and sharpened by hunger, lying in the trough of his cow-house, which was a close shed around three sides of the stable. He stopped, astonished, to gaze upon him. The little fellow had not rags enough upon him to cover his nakedness, and had drawn down some of the hay from the manger above to cover him, and the whole pile shook as he shuddered with the cold.

The old man gazed for a moment or two upon that troubled sleep, the irregular breathing, broken so often with faint moans that they touched him deeply, and as the tears sprang to his eyes, he murmured—

“This must not be so while I have a crust. Children must not starve in such a country as this!” So saying, he took the child gently in his arms, and bore it into his house, where his good old wife immediately took the dying orphan to her bosom, and soon warmed it into life again; but with the utmost exercise of her matronly skill, it was several days before the exhausted little one could recover strength enough to give any coherent account of himself.

Judge Campbell knew old Saunders well, and when he heard the boy's straight-forward story, he had every reason to believe that it was true, every word of it. In the meantime he had got up a great interest in this little *waif and stray*, which it had pleased Providence to cast in his path; and as the old couple had no children but two daughters, who were married and

comfortably settled, they finally determined to submit to what seemed like a requisition upon them by the Father of all on behalf of the fatherless, and adopted little Smith into their family as a son.

The circuits were some of them very large at that time, as was especially the case with that of Judge Campbell. Soon after this event he started on his round, and what was his inexpressible delight to find the first case on the docket, in the county which had the honor of owning old Saunders for a citizen, marked "Commonwealth *v.* Samuel Saunders, for abducting, murdering, or otherwise unlawfully making away with an indentured male child, known as William Smith," etc., etc.

The old man could scarcely contain his gravity upon the bench. He immediately ordered up the case—ruled down all quibbling attempts to obtain a postponement—and it was the general remark among the lawyers, that the usually lenient judge was more severe and harsh this term than they had ever known him to be before in twenty years upon the bench.

The case came on. The Judge compelled the minutest scrutiny of all the facts, and a most damning case was made out from the evidence. His own lawyers were cowed, and the pale and frightened prisoner listened with ghastly face, chattering teeth, and trembling hands to the Judge's charge to the jury, which sounded in its solemn tones and terrible denunciations much more like a sentence of death than a charge—when, as he was apparently about winding up with positive instructions to the jury to find the prisoner guilty—there was the sound of carriage wheels outside, and then a sudden commotion in the court.

In a moment the sheriff stepped forward and placed a slip of paper in the hands of the Judge, who had

paused at the first sound, and now read the paper calmly over twice; then deliberately throwing back his spectacles, he nodded assent to the sheriff, who, with a sort of half smile upon his face, made his way out of the court-room, and in a moment returned, pushing through the crowd, bearing in his arms the attenuated form of the missing boy, William Smith!

Such a thrill and murmur as ran through that court-room,—the old miser, who had at first sprung to his feet, convulsively dropped, swooning, into his seat, for the child had been artfully draped in white, and looked as if it might have just come from the grave, and the hoary-headed villain really did not know whether it was dead or alive,—for Mattie! tender, timid, gentle Mattie!—had kept her little companion's counsel, as she had promised, in spite of all the threats of her father, and all the terrors of a public trial. Indeed, poor child, she did not know herself whether he was alive, and had been almost crying her life away, because, in her innocence, she supposed the neighbours who had presented her father must of course have known the fact of his murder before they did it—he was in truth dead to her!

The scene that follows baffles description. Old Saunders was borne from the court-room in convulsions, and shriek was heard following shriek from him until the doors of the jail closed upon him. The Judge then ran rapidly over the facts of the case as nearly as he could without detailing his own share in the plot,—which was entirely unnecessary, as his object had been to further the cause of justice and humanity by punishing this monster morally, if it could not be done legally,—and then, exhibiting the boy to the jury, declared the bond of indenture to be forfeited, and that Saunders should be found in costs of suit, and compelled to give

security for the support and education of the boy until he was eighteen.

Such was the eventful opening of the public career of our hero. When we next hear of him he was a gay, voluble, dashing young lawyer, successful in his first case, and indeed in almost every other to which he put his hand. The old Judge, his adopted father, had retired from the bench upon a handsome competency, and though now very decrepid, could not resist the gratification of listening to the forensic triumphs of his "pet nursling of the cow-troughs," as he humorously used to term William. Whenever William had an interesting case on hand, the old man's carriage was invariably seen to roll up to the court-house door, and he to hobble in on crutches, when the dutiful young man was instantly at his side to assist him up the accustomed steps to the old accustomed chair, which still held its place for his occasional accommodation. After seeing him comfortably seated, and his gouty feet adjusted with scrupulous care, William would return with redoubled energy to his case.

It was always noticed that when the venerable ex-Judge was present, the face of the young lawyer flushed with anxious excitement. Then he made his very happiest efforts, and, carrying everything before him by the impetuous vehemence of his oratory, never lost a case; and the father and patron, in one, would sit with half closed eyes, in a sort of rapt ecstasy of enjoyment, while his lips occasionally moved in unconscious approval as the young man let off his happier hits. Smith soon became exceedingly popular, and his clients learned to avail their causes of this noble trait of Smith; and they never failed, when he had to speak on a doubtful case where there was much at stake, to have the old man informed of the day and hour, taking

care to ensure his presence. They knew well that Smith would sooner lose his right arm than make a failure in a legal argument before his beloved and venerated patron. What is still more strange, neither Smith nor the old Judge had the slightest suspicion of their motive, although it was well known to every one about the courts.

The Judge lived just long enough to bless the son of his adoption and his pride, who had been elected to the Assembly of the province the very year he came of lawful age. The good man then lay down in peace to die, for now he had seen the fruition of his hope. He left his property divided equally between his two daughters and the adopted son. He was soon followed by his faithful dame, and now the young orphan stood once more alone in the world. Not entirely alone, spiritually, either, for Mattie was still steadfast to her childish affection, and would listen to no suitors that came. To be sure, had she been disposed to coquetry, the indulgence would have been something difficult, for old Saunders became more and more miserly as he grew older, and more watchful of his daughter.

William and she had, however, in spite of his vigilance, managed, through the good offices of a relation of Mattie, who had learned to admire Smith, and had always loved Mattie, to keep up a broken correspondence by letter, and even to obtain an occasional interview, which was sufficient, during the long period I have passed over, to keep always bright and unbroken the links of that subtle chain which seemed from the first gradually binding their lives more inseparably in one.

Smith, though considered a rising young man with good fortune already in hand, and every prospect of great honours and a greater fortune before him, and therefore, of course, greatly sought after by the highest

ladies of the land, yet never for one moment did he falter or flinch from his allegiance to his gentle mistress with the chubby fingers! When he came to realize that it was really love that he bore her, he felt at once the serenity of entire content; and that love was enough for him, it filled his being, and he asked no other. The subject was never mentioned between them till after the death of his adopted parents, for William seems to have always felt as if his first duty was to them and gratitude,—love and himself were to be thought of afterwards.

He was now in such circumstances as permitted him to think of marriage. As it was utterly hopeless to expect the consent of the miserly old Saunders, he took the matter in his own hands, and in defiance married the sweet Mattie, and quietly installed his bride as mistress of the old town mansion left him by the Judge. Mattie proved a thrifty and a tender wife, and bore him sons and daughters, comely to look upon, and that gladdened their father's heart.

He, in the meantime, grew apace in manly honours, and at the time of the Declaration of Independence, was forty-five years of age, and one of the leading men, in a quiet way, of the patriot party.

Since his marriage, and up to this time, Smith's character seemed to have undergone a change, which was specially remarked by those who had watched his entrance upon public life. Up to the time of his marriage, he had exhibited the most recklessly spendthrift disposition; although enjoying a lucrative practice, yet it was observed that he always wanted money. He had no such apparent habits of extravagance as could account for such expenditure, so that he had the full benefit of all sorts of dark hints and vague surmises, not one of which was in the neighbourhood of truth.

There were a few who knew him better, who could have told how the base vultures and harpies that always flock around where there is a great heart to be torn and fed upon, regularly fleeced him of more than half the dues for his services, by some servile and whining appeal to his well known magnanimity, and singular disregard of gold. He was systematically victimized by a whole flock of such foul birds, who chuckled over the thought that they were gulling the smart young lawyer ; a great mistake ;—for his intuition of character was as quick as lightning.

His keen, gray eye was never at fault ; and he gave them what they cringed for out of contemptuous disgust for the creatures and the god they worshipped. He loathed the one as much as the other, and was equally anxious to get rid of both. His charities were just as reckless, though it began soon to be found that he was rather a dangerous person to task the patience of *too* far.

From the day he married Mattie he became a cautious, saving man ; and the hungry wretches that had battered upon his lofty generosity, or rather scorn, were soon scattered in dismay before the stern brow and powerful arm that hurled them right and left from his path. He had Mattie, beloved Mattie, to provide for now, and her precious little ones ; there was to be no more trifling. He became a rigid economist, or rather Mattie economized for him, and all his expenditures were left entirely to her frugal and patient housewifery. He neither gave nor spent now without first taking counsel of his heart-elected mistress ; and how skillfully she managed may be shown in the fact that in twenty years after their marriage, Smith was accounted one of the wealthiest men in the province. With this change came another, which was accounted quite as droll by the wise-ones. As a young man, he had shown great ambition

for political distinction, his prospects were extremely flattering, but he withdrew after serving one term, and steadily refused ever afterwards to be drawn into public life again.

But now that the great struggle for freedom was fairly entered upon, the William Smith of twenty-five was waked up again suddenly, after having slept the charmed sleep of domestic love and happiness for twenty years. Now again his contempt for gold, but as a medium of good, a mechanical means, exhibited itself as strikingly, but in a more rational and consistent manner than before; now his carefully hoarded wealth flowed like water, and the gentle Mattie saw it go, and said never a word nor shed a tear. So long as her beloved was spared to her, the gold might go. They had no right to it when Congress and the brave army needed it. They had no right to keep William selfishly at home with them, to sleep in a warm bed, when so many brave people were tracking the snows with the blood of their bare feet, and when General Washington himself was glad to sleep upon a snow bank with only his cloak for covering. "Let the gold go!" the brave woman was wont to say,—“it is all for liberty, and the children will be better for that than for all the wealth of the province!” and the gold did go!

Ay, there was no keeping back of the tribute there! William Smith had always exhibited a remarkable disinclination for scenes of bloodshed, considering the character of the times. He did not, even now, join the patriot army; but, as the chief of the Vigilance Committee, did far better service with his prompt sagacity and profuse liberality than he probably could have done in the field. We cannot follow him through the details of the acts of this noblest period of his career; suffice to say, that when the war ended in our dear-bought

independence,—he first took time to look upon the condition of his own affairs; the survey exhibited himself to himself a *beggar*!

Everything had been swallowed up in the vortex, except some few fragments of landed estate; and they had only been spared him because nothing could be raised on them in such troublous times. He smiled upon Mattie as he looked around proudly upon five handsome, manly boys, and three daughters, all pleasant variations of her, and patting her still fresh cheek, said gaily,—

“Mattie,—it’s all gone!—I am proud of the way it went—we’ve gained our holy cause,—I am content!—what say you, woman?”

“Dear Billy, what should I say!—Am I not proud of it as you!”

“Well, Mattie, neighbour Daniel Boone has got back from Kan-tuck-ee, across the mountains, as he calls it. He says it’s a great country, greater and more beautiful than any on this side the Alleghanies,—and Daniel’s a reliable man, you know!—and that plenty of splendid land is to be had for the settling and defending it; our boys are good riflemen,—what say you, Mattie?”

Mattie turned a little pale, and laid her cheek against that of her husband, but answered in a firm, round voice,—

“I am ready, Billy, to follow you!”

And this is all that was said between them; it was settled!

This was a few years after the time that Daniel Boone and his brother returned home for their wives and families. The news of his wonderful discoveries had flown like wildfire throughout Virginia and North Carolina, in both of which States he was well known. It had caused a great and general ferment among all

bold and reckless spirits in the old States, as well those on the border, as those whom a long war had unfitted for any other than a life of adventure. Various companies had been fitted out in different directions who had followed the return of the Boones. Settlements had been formed—forts built—and even municipal regulations commenced.

The place of general rendezvous was across the mountains, in what was called Powell's Valley, and the settlement on Clinch river was the frontier fort. The emigrants assembled in Powell's Valley in the Spring of 1784, and when all collected, started on their long journey. Among them was the family of William Smith. He had converted all that was left him into live stock, implements, etc. Himself and his whole family—Mattie and the girls included—were in the highest spirits in view of the novelty and wild loveliness of the scene they were to traverse.

The emigrants numbered fifty souls, the great majority of them women and children. The journey, as they were prepared to expect, proved a rough and tedious one, but they saw nothing of Indians, as yet. They arrived on the banks of the Licking river in the ordinary time. Harrod, who had several years since built the fort where Harrodsburg stands, was now returning from a visit to Virginia; and he, with several other of the principal men, Smith among them, left their families, as they supposed, with a sufficient guard in camp, and pushed forward to find Boone, at either Harrodsburg or Boonesborough, and bring back some supplies.

Alas, for that parting! When they returned six days afterwards, as the day was breaking, having accomplished the object of their mission, they found the camp just broken up, and, following on the scattered trail, caught

up with the frightened remnant of the emigrants, in full retreat back for the settlements on Clinch river.

"Where is my wife? and where are my children?" demanded Smith, in a cold, stern tone, of the person under whose command the camp had been left.

"You will find them where you left them! Ask the Shawanees—they can tell you the rest!"

"You have neglected your trust, and they are murdered," Smith replied, in a deliberate but trembling voice. "And yet we find you retreating!—where is your manhood, wretch! coward!" he shrieked, as he sprang at the throat of the man, and hurled him to the ground with such furious violence that the blood gushed from his nose and mouth, and he was thought for a long time to be dying. Without pausing an instant to see what he had done, the unfortunate man turned, and with the speed of the wild deer, fled back to the deserted camp.

Several hours subsequent, Harrod and some others returned to look after the dead, and they found Smith stretched upon the bodies of Mattie and the children, with his arms spread in the endeavour to clasp them all in one embrace. He looked up with tearless eyes, and smiling with a terrible serenity, took the spade from the hand of the nearest person, and commenced digging a grave for them. The sturdy men around, moved and awed by the speechless silence with which he proceeded, offered in low whispers to assist him. He motioned them solemnly away, and would not be aided. He thus worked on for hours, until a grave wide enough and deep enough had been hollowed—then reaching the cold form of Mattie from the spot where it lay, he clasped it to his breast a moment, held it off for one long fixed gaze, pressed those dear lips, and laid her gently down to rest. He then placed her first-born son upon her

right side; and as he saw the frown of desperate battle still on his fair young brow, and the shattered rifle clutched in the gripe of death, he smiled a strange and terrible smile. Her youngest born he laid next her heart; and to each, as he disposed the stiffening form in order, he gave the last embrace and farewell kiss. This done, he stood on the side of the grave for some moments, gazing silently down upon the home, the earthly heaven, he had lost, and then, without a word or groan, proceeded to fill up the grave. His comrades waited until he had finished, and had heaped a pile of stones to mark the place. They expected him to return with them now to the new camp which had been formed. He, however, took up his rifle, waved his hand in solemn adieu, and, without speaking, disappeared on the trail of the Shawanees.

Little was generally known, and less said, about Smith, from the time of this disappearance. It was generally believed that Boone, Harrod, and a few others, knew more of him than they chose to tell; the most that could be got out of any one concerning him, was a significant touch of the forehead and shake of the head. Boone, in particular, was believed to have frequent interviews with him, as he would take with him, at such suspected times, a double supply of powder and lead.

For a year or two the mystery of his solitary life received no elucidation whatever, until a Shawanee having been made captive by the people of Boone's Fort, they heard from him a terrible story of an Evil Demon that had been haunting the war-path of the Shawanees for nearly two years, and that from the hunting-trail and war-path together, more than thirty of their best braves, including several chiefs, had disappeared. The Shawanees believed that the Great Spirit was angry with them, and had sent a Medicine Spirit to punish

them. They were nearly determined on this account to leave their hunting-grounds in Kan-tuck-ee for ever. When questioned as to whether they had ever got sight of this Medicine, the answer was—that they had never seen it distinctly, but that of late their young men had pursued it often, and always came back with some of their number missing. They had never been able to overtake, or even to approach, the mysterious and terrible Medicine Spirit.

After this report got abroad, men began to mention the name of Bill Smith again—but it was with a feeling of unaccountable dread, and in low voices that they spoke. The timidity and uncertain movements of desultory attack which began to characterize the warfare of the Shawanees, once the best organized and most formidable of the tribes, came now to attract attention too. But all conjecture was set to rest, when, after awhile, Smith was seen to make his appearance at the Forts occasionally—but this was only when the Shawanees were known to be engaged in a foray. He usually came in ahead of the Indians, or, after some unaccountable fashion, suddenly appeared in the midst of a battle with them.

He was at the Blue Lick, at the Raisin, threw himself into Brian's Fort when it was stormed; and, indeed, he was known to have been in nearly all the principal battles in which Boone was present.

He was never heard to speak to any one—he came without a greeting and went without a farewell. He was regarded with a curious feeling of dread and respect by the border people, none of whom ever ventured to address a word to him. The Shawanees were driven across the Kan-tuck-ee River, then across the Green River.

Bill Smith disappeared, and never crossed Green

River again ; they thought towards the north that he must finally have fallen a sacrifice to his monomania of vengeance. It will be remembered by what accident I found his grave, and heard from old Uncle Jake Latham something with regard to his later years.

After seeing the last canoe of the Shawanees launched upon the Ohio, and sending a death-messenger in farewell after it, the old man had built him a hut in the most inaccessible part of the Green River hills, and there the remainder of his days were spent in solitary quiet. He hunted just enough to furnish him with food, and powder and shot—never went near any one but Uncle Jake, who made his purchases for him ; and at the age of eighty-eight was found dead in his cabin. He seemed sleeping calmly, with a serene smile still upon his face, such as might have greeted his Mattie above, waiting for him. His face in death alone had lost that still and fearful expression of astonished ferocity, which was said never to have left it from the time of the death of Mattie and his children. Monomaniacs are proverbially known for the frequently marvellous cunning displayed by them in bringing about the accomplishment of the one object, which is the single thought of their lives.

“ Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord ! ” Who, at this time, in weighing the acts of this remarkable man, while wasting under the long fever of his terrible vengeance, shall venture to forget, “ Judge not, that ye be not judged ! ”

It was ever thus that our fathers of the “ Dark and bloody ground ” were tried !

CHAPTER V.

JAMES HARROD, OF HARRODSBURG.

What makes a hero—James Harrod—His character and career—Incidents of Indian warfare—The Red Man outwitted by the White—Harrod's generosity to vanquished foes, and kindness to friends—New Settlers, and their difficulties.

AFTER all the bombast of hero worshippers, it is astonishing how little it takes to make a real hero! Like many of those important discoveries in mechanics, which have revolutionized the world, the combinations are so simple, that when men come to realise them, the general exclamation is, "Why, pshaw, I could have done that myself!" No doubt such wiseacres could have done it themselves, but somehow they didn't do it! and what renders the parallel still more complete is, that when the humble mechanic has accomplished the work, has chained an element with a silken thread, he looks upon the mighty achievement as nothing, and is bowed down with shame that men should so wonder at a thing so plain.

Your true hero never understands why men should marvel that he has only done his duty, and the plaudits of the crowd are to him only a heart-sickening commentary upon its own unworthiness. Why should they applaud him for only acting like a man? Had they expected him to act like a brute, and therefore been surprised into raptures? Or was it that they were conscious that they would have acted like brutes themselves under the same circumstances?

The world may say what it will of the natural equality of mankind, but there is often more in one large brain and large heart than in a whole nation. It is not by any means learning, or station, or honours that constitutes this greatness; these are but the tinsel, the appliances, the outward show,—in a word,—

“The man’s a man for a’ that;”

and it was indeed among the early scenes of the settlement of Kentucky, that the fine gold was separated, and that the man stood forth in the nude grandeur of the heroic virtues.

There was nothing of the pomp and circumstance here of adventitious place, to bolster up padded and pretentious nobility. State was trampled in the bloody mire of struggle, and all regalia, but such as nature had bestowed, turned into plough-lines and significant halters.

The contest here was hand to hand, and foot to foot, with foes too stern and real for a silken diplomatist to soothe. In his unhoused wild condition, the strong man wrestled with the panther for its cave, and took its dappled hide for covering. Starched ruffs and white gloves would have served ill in such a battle. The death-hug, when the white man and the red man met, would have poorly become the voluptuous court, and the bleak, wintry winds would scarce have put a shirt on warm.

There was no dodging here,—the axe was first swung by brawny arms, and then a shelter rose; and before no dainty strength that fed on syllabubs would those tall forests bow, that bread might grow! No shaky nerve, or eye dulled in the sickly glare of show, could hold the heavy rifle in a vice-like grasp, and guide it clear and sure as death’s own arrow flies.

Here action was eloquence, with deeds for words, and the glib and oily art of demagogues learns no such language: the axe spoke louder than the honeyed phrase; and forests, thundering in their fall, rolled out the grandest sentences: the rifle cracked the sharpest jokes, and staggering buffaloes roared bathos best upon the bloody plain!

One of those men of nature, whose large brain and large heart, hard hands and giant thews, best fitted them to cope in mastery with such conditions, was James Harrod, the founder of Harrodsburg, Kentucky, and one of the noblest of the early companions of Boone.

Harrod was one of those persons who make their appearance in the world much as an oak-tree comes into it: nobody hears it grow, sees it grow, or knows that it is, and has a being, until suddenly a people look up and find themselves sheltered beneath its boughs, and nourished by the fruit it rains in benediction upon their heads.

So little was known of the youth of James Harrod, that the histories of the time do not even name the colony from whence he came, nor even the precise year in which he emigrated; they only know that he came early with Boone, was most probably a Virginian, went back to that State, and returned to Kentucky in 1774; joined Colonel Lewis and his followers on the way, and was with them in the battle at the mouth of the Kenhawa; and that in the next year he settled himself on the site of the present town of Harrodsburg. This is about the extent of the chronology bearing upon that early period of his history.

But for years before this period the name of the stalwart young hunter was familiar along the borders, and associated with that of Boone in many a feat of

self-denying hardihood and generous chivalry. He was tall, strong, modest, and simple. He had read no book but that of nature, knew no art but wood-craft, hated nothing on earth but an Indian and a pole-cat, and never said "Boys, you do it!" but "Boys, come on!" His rifle was the longest, the heaviest, and the surest; his calm, frank eye was never at a fault to mark the distant game, to meet the gaze of deadly foe, or smile back truth to friend. His arm was resistless as his tongue was slow. How can you make a hero out of a block so rough as this? We had nothing to do with the manufacture; God made him a hero, if he was one!

The unwritten history of that time tells many a touching narrative of the deeds of this young hunter: his skill on the war-trail, his vigilance and his wonderful powers of endurance, soon made him one of the chief supports of the feeble and shattered settlements, which then, in the name of God and civilization, dared presume to hold and occupy this wide land, which for its richness and its beauty had for many centuries been the golden apple of dispute between powerful tribes of savages, on the north and the south. The hardiness and simplicity of his habits, his fresh and unbroken constitution, his great frame, endowed with a natural strength remarkable, everywhere gave him supremacy even over those border sons of Anak, among whom he seemed to move as peer.

Such were his habits of incessant activity, and so cool his self-reliance, that he never waited for companions, on the longest and most dangerous of his expeditions. He would often be gone for weeks and even months together, no one knew whither or for what end, and the first thing heard of him would be his sudden appearance, to put the settlements on their guard against the approach of some Indian war-party.

During these long absences his industry was untiring; all the game that he could kill was cured and stored, after the manner of the Indians, beyond the reach of wild beasts, or even of the sagacity of his teachers. To these stores he could resort at any time of scarcity, for supplies for the block-houses.

His knowledge of Indian life, and confidence, was such that he frequently continued to hunt alone, when he knew well, by the signs around him, that Indians were hunting on the same ground. The proud hunter would not give way, but took the chances with his red foe.

On one such occasion he had perceived several fine deer, grouped, feeding in a small open glade in the forest, near the Kentucky river. He had approached them with much precaution, for a shot, and having gained the desired point, was kneeling behind a tree, and in the act of raising his rifle to take aim, when the buck of the herd lifted its head suddenly, and uttered the peculiar shrill whistle which indicates that they have either seen or smelt danger.

Harrod was too prompt a woodsman not to perceive instantly, from the direction in which the deer turned its head, that there was another foe present than himself. He remained motionless, holding his breath, when, at the sharp crack of a rifle from the opposite side of the glade, the startled buck sprang into the air and fell dead.

The report of Harrod's rifle followed so instantly that it seemed a mere prolongation of the first sound; a nobler quarry bit the dust, the ball of the back-woodsman met the proud heart of a Shawanee chief, who had leaned forward from his covert to fire. Harrod had known for several days that there was a hunting-party of Shawanees in the neighbourhood.

At another time his own wary game was nearly

played successfully upon himself. He was on a great buffalo trail, leading to the Blue Licks. He had been hunting for several days with great success, and this time had seen no Indian sign, and was not aware that any had come down. He had wounded a large bull that had left the herd, and stood at bay several miles distant, in a thick wood; Harrod was obliged to approach it with great precaution, for the animal was now very dangerous, as is always the case when it is badly wounded.

He had gained his position, and when in the very act of firing, caught glimpse of a warrior taking aim at him from behind a tree. He fired, for it was too late to help that, but in the same instant dropped as if killed. The warrior fired, of course, and his ball made a hole through the wolf-skin cap of Harrod as he fell. He lay perfectly still, while the Indian, after stopping to load his rifle, as they always do before leaving cover, now approached him to get his scalp, but did so with characteristic wariness, leaping from tree to tree; he came near, and seeing that the body lay perfectly still, sprang forward, scalping-knife in hand, but as he stooped to grasp the scalp-lock, quick as lightning the long and powerful arms of Harrod were clasped about his neck, and with the sudden throe of a waking panther, the warrior was crushed in his herculean hug, and writhed helpless on the ground beneath him.

There is yet another anecdote of his individual prowess, with something of the same character as those given above, which, although a household story in Kentucky, is not so well known elsewhere.

The Shawanees had made several attacks upon Boone's station, against which settlement they had always expressed the bitterest animosity, on account, no doubt, of its having been the first white settlement held in the

country. Boone was absent at the Licks, with a great part of the men of the station, making salt; the prowling parties of Indians had killed their cattle, driven in their hunting parties, and so shortened their supplies of meat, that the little garrison was reduced to great straits.

At this juncture Harrod made his appearance unexpectedly, on his return from one of his long expeditions. Finding the condition of things, he first proposed to some of the remaining men, that they should accompany him to one of the nearest of his depôts of meat. The risk was very great; and Harrod, perceiving from their hesitation that the men were not willing to go, left the station that night alone, telling the women to be of good cheer, that he would bring them back meat.

He found game very shy in the morning, and as there was plenty of Indian sign about, he determined to have the first meat he could get, and return with it as soon as possible to the relief of the station. He came in sight of a small herd of deer, which were moving as if they had been lately startled, and were still on the look-out; this caused him to use great circumspection. It was not long before he came across signs, which induced him to think that there were several Indians close at hand. The daring hunter cared nothing for the odds, but coolly resolved to have one of those deer or lose a scalp, and of the latter there surely seemed to be a great likelihood.

This would have been foolhardiness with any other man, but with Harrod it was entirely a matter of course. He had never turned aside from his path for the red man, nor did he ever intend to do so. He claimed those hunting-grounds, too, and those deer were his, if he could win them, and his he intended they should be.

His circumspection was not a little increased on per-

ceiving the marks of the mocasin on the trail of the deer. These were before him, and he might come upon them at any moment. This did not deter him, for he saw at a glance his advantage, as he was on the look-out for them, while they were on the look-out for the deer, and evidently, from the carelessness of the signs they left, entirely unconscious of his proximity. He had followed on in this manner for several miles, taking care to expose his body as little as possible, and indeed advancing from tree to tree all the time, as if in a bush fight.

The sudden whistle of a deer, followed instantly by the ring of two rifles close on his left, gave him warning that the time for business had come. The Indians kept close, and as he was peeping cautiously round a tree, endeavouring to get a sight of them, a rifle ball from the right whizzed through the heavy mass of black hair that fell down over his shoulders, stinging his neck sharply as it grazed past. He crouched instantly, and all was as still as death for a long time, for the two on the left had taken the hint, and lay close, while the Indian on the right did the same, while he reloaded and watched for another chance.

Here was a fix certainly for any common man, beleaguered on two sides, and it might be on every side, for all he could tell. But from what is known of Harrod's character, I have no doubt he enjoyed the fix; for it was just such a one as he delighted to get himself into, for the pleasure of getting himself out again.

The foot of the tree at which he crouched was surrounded by bushes or shrubs about three feet high, and he was obliged to lift his head above these before he could fire. He wore his famous wolf-skin cap, as usual; and after waiting till he was convinced that there was no chance of getting a sight of the cautious foe, he

placed it upon the muzzle of his rifle, and, after some pre-fatory manœuvring among the shrubs, to show that he was getting restless, gradually and cautiously elevated the cap.

The ring of the three rifles was almost simultaneous, as it rose a little above the bushes, and before the echoes had died away, the death-shriek of the warrior on the right followed them into the shadows. Harrod lay still for a long time again before he concluded to try the manœuvre over; the cap was cautiously elevated again, and this time drew but one fire, for the Indians had taken warning. It effected all that Harrod required, however, for it disclosed the exact position of these two. He had only known the direction before, but not the position, as his eyes had been occupied in watching the one on the right—in less than half a minute, the Indian who had fired, exposed part of his body in sending home his rod. Harrod shot him through the heart.

The other Indian commenced a rapid retreat. He got off, but Harrod thought he carried a third ball with him. They had been entirely deceived by the manœuvre of the cap, and the survivor was clearly of the opinion, that, as they had killed two, there must be several white men there yet. Harrod proceeded at his leisure to dress the two deer they had brought down, and that night entered the station, to the great joy of all, with a full load of meat.

The benevolence of Harrod seems to have been equal to his energy. His hut, one of the first erected in the country, became at once the nucleus of a station; thither the surveyors, the speculators, the hunters and emigrants, flocked for shelter and protection, and the names of Harrodsburg and Boonesborough became the first identified, in the minds of weary adventurers of every grade to this dangerous region, with the prospect of

rest and the hope of security. Other huts had rapidly gone up around his, until more secure defences had become necessary, and a fort was built.

Thus, under the shelter of these two names—Boone and Harrod—the permanent occupation of Kentucky by the white race commenced.

These men, though both comparatively young, seem to have reproduced in themselves perfectly the primitive type of the ancient patriarchal character, which was so much needed in the elementary condition of the society they were organizing. All new comers were their children; they were received as such with open arms; they were watched over, guarded, and guided, until they learned to stand alone and take care of themselves; and, what was still more remarkable, were allowed, without a murmur or a thought, to avail themselves of nearly all of the extraordinary labours and sufferings of their noble and unselfish guardians.

For example, Boone, who might, as I mentioned before, have been the richest man in the whole West, had he been as grasping as he was good and wise, entered no land, and died in wandering poverty, with no claim to one spot in that paradise into which he had led his countrymen. Harrod exhibited the same unselfish traits, as we shall see.

When a new settler came, he inquired for a locality. Harrod's knowledge of the surrounding country was at his service; he shouldered his axe, and helped the new comer to run up a hut. The family out of meat, Harrod, by some necromancy peculiar to himself, had found it out. He was off to the woods, and soon a fine deer, or fat bear, or quarters of a buffalo, was placed at their disposal. Their horses had strayed in the range, with which the husband was not yet familiar, and no ploughing could be done—Harrod's incessant activity has made

the discovery in passing, that something was wrong in the new clearing; his frank and manly voice is heard shouting from the fence, "Hilloa, Jones! What's the matter? No ploughing done yet, I see! Nothin' wrong, I hope?"

"Well, yes!—the old horse been gone these five days—can't find him down thar in that cane-brake range—been lost myself already two whole days in looking for him, and I've jest about gin it up."

"Never mind, Jones, you'll get used to that range sometime before long. That horse of your'n is a blood-bay, aint he?"

"Yes—snip down the nose, and left hind foot white—collar marked bad on the shoulder."

"Good morning, Jones!"

A few hours afterwards, Jones's horse, with his snip on his nose, is quietly driven up to the fence and turned in—James Harrod walks on.

News comes into the station that the Indians have attacked the house of a settler, five miles distant, and murdered all the family but the two daughters, whom they are hurrying off to a brutal and perilous captivity—the war-cry of Harrod is instantly heard.

"Come, boys! come, boys! we must catch those rascals—we can't spare our girls!"

While his dark complexion glows with enthusiasm, and his black eye flames again—the men know their leader, for he is off without them in a moment, and they are soon ready.

The swift and tireless pursuit, the wary approach to the camp, the night attack, with its short, fierce struggle, the rescue, the return, were all the not unusual incidents of their wild life.

In the capacity of spy, guide, or ranger-captain, his excursions into the Indian country were very daring and

frequent. There was no enterprise too audacious for his enthusiasm; none requiring patience, dexterity, endurance of hunger, thirst, and fatigue, too serious for his cool self-reliance to undertake, and that most frequently alone. He avoided, when possible, having other men with him; for, he said, they always complained of the hardships or the dangers before the fun was fairly commenced with him, and therefore it cost him more trouble to take care of them, than to do all there was to be done himself twice over. This extraordinary love of solitary adventure was one of the marked characteristics of James Harrod: indeed, the Indians christened him the "Lone Long-Knife," and dreaded his mysterious prowess very greatly.

He on several occasions entered their villages in the night, to ascertain their plans; and once, when discovered by a young warrior, struck him to the earth with his huge fist, and then threw himself into the neighbouring forest, though not without being seen and pursued; twenty or thirty warriors followed him, and so close were they upon his heels at the start, that their rifle balls showered like hail about him.

The swiftness of Indian runners has passed into a proverb, but they had a man before them more swift and tireless than themselves. He gained so much upon them, that by the time they reached the Miami, which was ten miles distant, there were only three warriors who seemed to be continuing the chase.

Harrod swam the river without hesitation; as he reached the opposite bank they came up, and fired at him as he climbed the bank: the river was wide here, and the balls fell short. He now took a tree upon the edge of the forest, and removing the waterproof cover of deer's bladder from the lock of his rifle, prepared for them, should they attempt to cross the river. The

Indians hesitated a moment, for it had now been some time full daylight, and they seemed to have some apprehension that he might make a stand, but hearing at this instant the coming yells of those who had fallen behind, they replied, and plunged into the stream.

Harrod waited until they were more than half across, when at the crack of his rifle the foremost sank; the other two paused, then turned to go back, but before they could get out of range, he wounded a second desperately, who gave himself up to the current, and was swept down. The third, by a series of rapid dives, like the manœuvres of a wounded wild duck, succeeded in baffling the aim of Harrod even, and got out of range.

Harrod heard the furious howl of the main body of his outwitted pursuers, who had reached the river as he was making off again through the forest: the chase was not continued further.

What adds not a little to the dramatic interest of this adventure, is, that when, two hours afterwards, Harrod struck the bank of the Miami again, he saw upon a pile of driftwood, which had collected at the mouth of one of the small tributaries of the stream, some living object, which he took for a large turtle glistening in the sun, as he struggled to drag his unwieldy body upon the logs to bask.

He stopped to gaze; and imagine his astonishment, when he saw a tall Indian drag his body slowly from the water, and finally seat himself upon the logs. He had lost his gun, and commenced endeavouring to stifle the bleeding from a bullet wound in his shoulder. Harrod knew that it was the second Indian he had shot, and who had most probably reached one of the pieces of driftwood of which the swollen river was at the time full, and sustained himself by it all this distance, badly wounded as he was.

Here was a trial for such a man as Harrod ; his foe was wounded and helpless ; take him prisoner he feared would be impossible, and letting him escape he felt to be contrary to his duty to his own people. He thought within himself some little time before deciding upon his course, for shoot the poor wretch he could not.

His determination formed, he made a wide circuit, and crept cautiously upon the wounded warrior from behind ; a large tree stood close to the drift, which being gained, Harrod laid down his gun, then suddenly stepping into full view from behind the tree, raised his hands to show that he was unarmed.

“Uguh !” grunted the astonished warrior, making a sudden movement as if to plunge into the water again. Harrod placed his hand upon his heart, spoke two words in the Shawanee tongue, when the Indian paused, and looking at him a moment earnestly, bowed his head in token of submission. Harrod helped him to the bank, tore his own shirt and bound up the wound with cooling herbs ; and then, as he found the savage unable to walk, threw him across his broad shoulders, and bore him, not to the station, but to a cave which he used as one of his places of deposit. No one knew of the existence of this hiding-place but himself, and he had discovered it by the accident of having driven a wounded bear into it.

The entrance was very small and covered with briars ; pushing these aside, you looked down into what seemed a deep well ; when the eye became accustomed to the darkness, you could gradually discover a dry, white bottom. Harrod had descended into it by means of a pole ladder which he had let down ; this ladder, which is essentially a frontier contrivance, consists merely of a stout sapling, which is thick set with limbs ; the sapling being cut down, the limbs are

chopped off within six inches from the trunk, thus leaving excellent foothold to climb by.

When you reached the bottom, which was about twelve feet below the surface, you found yourself in a small, but irregularly shaped room, the ceiling of which was hung with many beautiful and fantastic stalactites, from among which, and at the farther extremity of the room, a small clear stream poured steadily down into a white, round basin, which it had worn into the solid limestone.

The little stream, after passing across the length of the chamber, found vent through a dark hole in the wall, about large enough to admit a man, crawling in on his hands and knees. Here, over the whitest sand, it escaped into unknown caverns beyond. From the point of every stalactite on the ceiling a drop of water fell slowly upon stalactites rising to meet them, many of which had assumed the most extraordinary shapes. About twelve feet square of the ceiling and floor of this singular subterranean chamber was as dry as tinder.

I am thus particular in describing this cave, having once visited it, and been singularly impressed with the quaint peculiarities of the place. Among other things, the steady dropping of the water upon the white and ringing stalactites, formed a sort of low harmonicon, the sweetness of which I shall never forget.

In this strange hiding-place, as the story goes, Harrod concealed his wounded foe, for the generous hunter having once determined to aid him, possessed too much magnanimity to subject the proud warrior to the humiliation, worse to him than death, of being paraded before his white foes as a prisoner. Harrod took care of him till his recovery, visiting him regularly on his hunting excursions. When the warrior grew strong again, Harrod gave him a supply of provisions, and

pointing towards the north, bade him return to his people, and tell them how the "Long-Knife" treats his wounded foe.

Nothing was ever heard directly from this warrior again, though Boone, who was aware of the circumstance, and who was taken prisoner by the Shawanees a short time afterwards, always attributed the kind treatment he received from the Indians, and their good faith to eighteen of his men, to the good offices of this grateful savage. These men were engaged, under his command, in making salt at the saline springs, and surrendered at his own suggestion, he having been surprised and taken prisoner while hunting, and the promise of kind treatment and release having been pledged to him by the Indians. They, after taking their arms, ammunition, etc., permitted the men to return to the station unharmed. They took Boone with them, however, to Canada, where he was shortly ransomed.

The popularity of Harrod became very great; for these many extraordinary feats and kind acts were not his only claims on the now rapidly increasing population of Kentucky, for their respect and gratitude. His manly wisdom and counsel, were fully equal to his efficiency in the field; for though to the last he could barely write his name, and continued to be a man of few words,—one short sentence of his, direct, as it always was, and to the purpose, was of greater value in those times than all a mouthing demagogue could utter in a year.

He was elected colonel, married happily a genuine Kentucky girl, and was universally venerated and idolized, though yet scarcely past his prime. His modesty was unconquerable, and he shrunk from all honours which he could possibly avoid.

Strange to say, not even the endearments of his

happy home, the love of his fellow-citizens, or the charms of a society daily increasing in refinement, could win him from that singular passion for solitary hunting,—which seems to be general and peculiar to the Hunter-Naturalist, in whatever guise he may be found—and for which Harrod was so remarkable. He would still, rifle in hand, bury himself for weeks, and even months, in some unpenetrated fastness of the wilderness, from whence he would return as unexpectedly as he went, laden with the trophies of the hunt.

Once he thus disappeared, never to return! By what casualty of the chase, or in what deadly contest with his Indian foes he perished, no one could ever more than conjecture.

Thus died a true hero!—as he would no doubt have chosen best to die,—amidst those wild, stern scenes he had so dearly loved, and in fair battle with the chances that he gloried most in daring. Face to face with God, the ancient nature, and his foe, his noble heart was stilled, and his strong arm fell nerveless!

CHAPTER VI.

A BEAR HUNT.

Texan Rangers on an expedition—Equipment and arms—Mexican horse-stealers—The San Saba Hills—A dash at the bears—Perils of the chase—Left alone—Cutting up the spoils—An ugly visitor—Getting out of the “fix”—A reunion—and return.

DURING my sojourn in Texas, I undertook a solitary and perilous journey to San Antonio de Bexar, then the extreme frontier post. On my arrival, I found the company of reckless scamps who called themselves Rangers, and made this old town their head-quarters, in a very bad humour—what would you conjecture was the cause? Simply, there had been no fighting to do for a whole month!

I had never heard a spoiled belle complain half so pathetically of a decaying season, and the scarcity of victims, as did these petulant amateurs of the late difficulties in the way of raising a fight! They seemed to imagine the whole world was conspiring against them—that a coalition, including not Mexicans and Indians only, but even “his celestial highness, the brother of the sun,” had been formed for the express purpose of killing them off, through a stagnation of blood, supervening upon the horrible monotony of an endless peace! Rather than die so base a death, they were just vowing to rush into any alternative extreme—sack some village or Catholic mission on the other side of the Rio Grande—or go up into the mountains and burn an Indian

town, and see if that would not stir the hornets and give them something to do.

After the deliberation due in so dire a strait, Hays, their good-natured little captain, too much moved, perhaps, by the tenderness of his sympathy, and a desire to give them full amends for all they had endured, decided upon the latter of these alternatives.

Either of them was promising enough; but he, as in duty bound, of course selected that around which clustered the fullest fruition in perspective! To form some idea of his accommodating temper and their insatiable gourmandie, imagine a party of eight white men and two Mexicans, traversing an almost desert prairie, three hundred miles in width, with the purpose to reach the mountainous region near the sources of the San Saba river, in which lay the fastnesses of those formidable tribes that scour the plains of Mexico and Texas—intending, when gained, to penetrate them, and destroy some one of the towns hid away in their gorges—with, furthermore, the pleasant prospect of having thousands of infuriated warriors howling on their trail back to the very square from which they started—that is, if, contrary to all probabilities, they ever should reach it again. If possessed of a vivid imagination, after grasping all that this view presents, you may form some faint conception of what these remarkably moderate young gentlemen were contented to consider “sport!”

Captain Hays had thrown out a hint, as the climactic attraction to any one who might need further incentive, or dream of hesitating, that if we had not seen *too* many Indians by the time we reached the foot of the San Saba ridge, we would recreate there a day or so in killing bears, which animals were reported to be wonderfully abundant, and, collecting wild honey, drink it with the oil!

This last mellifluous argument proved too much for a rotund and doughty little doctor—like myself, lately from the States—who had been slightly affected by some natural qualms of prudence; but now his inner visuals were all pre-occupied and inspired by the scenes round the camp-fire—himself, with sleeves rolled up—the sharp knife in his dumpy red hand—the fat steaks falling off beneath his strokes upon the napkin of leaves—the steam, “like rich distilled perfumes,” that rose as they hissed upon the spit before the cheery fire. Then the brown honey in stately liquid flow from tin cups, strewed over the tenderly crisped flesh! Oh! it was too delicious! What cared he for Comanches after that rapt vision! Yes, go he would, though they swarmed by thousands to turn him from his bliss!

The best of the joke, though, was, that after this we could not get the doctor anyhow to realize that there would be Indians to fight. Remonstrate as we might, he would see and know of nothing else ahead but these rare delicacies; nor could he be induced to make provision in his equipments for anything other than securing them. He had got hold of something he called a bear spear, which a wag had quizzed him into believing to be an infallible weapon in hunting that animal; then, in addition, slinging a small axe to his saddle-bow, to be used in cutting out the honey, along with a huge pair of holster-pistols, he declared himself, with great vivacity, “Ready, boys!”

We tried to induce him to throw away his spear and take a gun. “Never! What, would you have me unsteady my nerves by lugging a great gun? How shall I then be able to dissect with that nicety of skill so indispensable to attaining the true flavour of a bear-steak? You are surely demented, gentlemen!” and spurring his bob-tailed and vicious-looking pony into a

canter, he led the way out of the square. We were all soon clattering after him.

It requires little time, after an expedition has been determined upon, for a troop like this to get ready for it; with his rifle, his pistols, his bowie knife, his tin cup, "water gourd," buffalo robe, lariat, Mexican bridle, saddle and spurs, the jolly Ranger feels himself prepared to go wherever his horse can carry him, and to meet "all imminence the gods address their dangers in!" He never troubles himself to-day about what he shall eat or what he shall wear to-morrow; for, so long as his eye is true, and his aim steady, his good rifle will supply him with meat for food, and skins for clothes; and what more could any reasonable mortal ask?

In truth, we were an odd-looking set—each one dressed in buckskin, fashioned and trimmed very much to suit individual taste, with no sort of respect to uniformity—our whole equipment making up a singular amalgamation of Mexican, Indian, and American costumes, while our arms were of almost every conceivable stamp. The most experienced hunters carried the old-fashioned long-barreled rifle, single-barreled pistols, and a heavy knife; while those of us just from the States, were loaded down with the newest inventions—six-shooting revolvers, double-barrels, and all sorts of new-fangled notions, which we supposed were to make us, individually, a host—for which unwarranted supposition we got ourselves laughed at most heartily, and were afterwards glad to have time for repentance.

Our horses, some of them mustangs, others American, had been carefully selected with reference to their speed and endurance; and all, with the exception of the doctor's nondescript pony, were fine-looking animals.

After clearing the narrow streets of the dilapidated town, and gaining the open prairie, which lay stretched

like an ocean before us, with its long waves stilled upon the leap—it was a glorious intoxication to feel the noble brutes exulting in their strength beneath us, as they bounded over the undulations; and, in one full ringing shout, our pent-up spirits greeted the mountain winds that came dashing their cool welcome against our faces!

Ho! for the mountains! ho! away!

For merry men are we;

A short but rapid ride through a lovely region—whose diversified features shifted in panoramic changes every moment as we dashed by—brought us to a small stream, which was to be our camping place for the night; and here, we must confess, that as is invariably the case on the first night out, there was a sort of intoxication rife round our camp-fires very different from that healthy exhilaration we have spoken of. Our “water-gourds” we had discovered would hold “noyau” just as well, and the time was decidedly at a discount for the evening, which was spent in as gay and reckless a carouse as ever chased the “lagging night-shades,” with songs and laughter through the “sma’ hours.”

Of course, in such a state of things, there was no watch set—and we all felt very foolish, on waking the next morning, to find some of our best horses gone—among them my own gallant American. Some of the thieving Mexicans of Bexar, having in view the well known custom of the Rangers, to commence all long and perilous expeditions with a spree, had slunk and crawled upon our trail, since we left town, and having ascertained our camping ground, kept themselves invisible until we were far gone in the profound sleep which followed our excesses; then crept near the camp, and cutting the lariats of those horses on the outside, rode them off!

Great as our vexation was, a general burst of laugh-

ter rung out on all sides when it was discovered that an attempt had been made to carry off the doctor's pony too; but from the indications, it was plain that the vicious little rascal had been too much for the thief—for it had compelled that luckless personage to leave his "sombbrero" under its heels, and the print of his prostrate form was plain enough on the damp grass.

Pony rose a hundred per cent. in the estimation of all parties forthwith, and his quaint owner with him. There was nothing for it but to wait patiently until those who had horses should return, and replace the stolen ones by purchases from the nearest "Cavayard." As they had nearly a thousand to select from, we were consoled by the hope that we should get at least passable horses.

The return of our messengers late in the evening was awaited by myself, as well as the other unfortunates, with great anxiety, for all that could be hoped of either pleasure or security, on an expedition such as this, depended very much upon the character and mettle of our horses. It was in vain to regret the noble fellow I had lost, for he would be across the Rio Grande in the shortest possible time. I could only mutter vengeance against Mexican horse-thieves in general, and hope he might be at least tolerably replaced. It will be seen in the event, that we did not attach too much importance to this circumstance.

When the detachment arrived, I was agreeably surprised to find a powerful, wild-eyed, fine-looking animal assigned to me; but my pleasure was not a little dashed at discovering, as soon as I undertook to handle him, that he had never had a saddle on his back! Here was a poser, with a vengeance! What was I to do with an untamed mustang, as strong as a buffalo, and vicious as a wild cat? After enjoying a laugh at my chop-

fallen, chagrined look, on realising this astounding fact, my tormentors suggested to me the only alleviation, which was to pay one of our Mexican guides a dollar, mount his horse, and let him take mine in hand for a day or two, in which time he would make him "*cabello de buena rienda*" for me.

In a little while the copper-skinned knave was careering like the wind over the plains on my frantic steed, while the mischievous Rangers comforted me with the assurance, that we would probably catch up with him "in a day or two!" However, he came into camp late at night, with the horse sweltering in foam, and nearly exhausted by a run of some ten miles and back, and assured me that he was "*muey buena*"—very good!—that is, he had been able to stand this tremendous race, without falling dead in his tracks, which constituted the Mexican standard of excellence in these cases. I was eager to mount him myself next morning, for I did not fancy the idea of having his wind broken, by this Mexican and summary process of taming.

I was approaching him incautiously, without paying any attention to the guide's reiterated "*No! no! por Dios!*" when he suddenly threw out his heels in such devilish earnest that they clattered together just above my forehead, and reminded me that "prudence was the better part," etc., so far as he was concerned, yet awhile. I turned off with a feeling of high indignation at this ungrateful reception of my kindly intentions, and consigned him over to the tender mercies of the Mexican, with the petulant and unnecessary injunction, to "kill him, or ride that devil out of him!" I have some times since thought that the horse must have understood this cruel speech, and to have bided his time to avenge himself right royally—and he did it, too, as you will presently see!

The Rangers were most of them gentlemen, in breeding at least, so that the days of our travel glided by delightfully, enlivened with pleasantries and tales of curious adventure, to which I was a most untiring listener. I had, in the meantime, received my horse at the hands of the Mexican, and was very well pleased at his behaviour. The character of the scenery was now entirely changed. It had been agreeably diversified before, but now we had stretched around us to the horizon, the fatiguing monotony of a dead-level, sterile plain, covered with coarse thin grass, with only once in fifteen or twenty miles a clump of stunted bushes to relieve the eye. This continued for several days.

At last, however, just as we were beginning to be excessively bored by it, a dim broken line looked in the lilac distance before us like a great bank of clouds. This, to our great relief, was announced to be the San Saba Hills.

"Now," said the little Doctor, who had been looking somewhat disconsolate, but brightened up when he heard this, "Now for the bear-steaks! And I warn you, gentlemen, that I shall win the first that are eaten, with this same spear of mine, which has been the subject of so much wit among you all! You need not laugh,—I shall confound you before to-morrow night."

And saying this, he plunged his spurs into the sides of bobtail with such unwonted energy, that he, feeling himself furiously insulted, commenced a series of caperings even more vivacious and complicated than usual, and persevered in them with such determination, that, after a hard struggle, the Doctor was fairly somerseted, bear-spear and all, amidst a roar of merriment. He got nimbly to his legs again, dealt two kicks this time, with a little more vigour than usual, and remounted.

By night, we could clearly distinguish the different knobs, and the shaded valleys between them. We camped in high spirits, for no traces had yet been discovered of Indians, and we were near enough the hills to reach them in time for sport in the morning.

Bright and early we were under weigh—our arms all overhauled and in fine order—with a keen relish for the rough work before us. As we neared the hills, they presented singular features. They rose directly and abruptly from the level of the plain we had been traversing. It seemed to be a succession of ridges, marched out like an army of Titans upon the meadows—the lowest in front—rising higher and higher as the eye traced each line back until it grew up into the clouds; and, from the level, we could look into the deep, cool, green valleys that went winding among their feet.

Those in front were by no means precipitous, but rose from the valleys with a gentle curve, clothed all the way to the top with mighty live oaks, bearded like patriarchs, whose trunks stood far apart to give room for their long knotty arms, festooned with silvery moss, to spread over the girth, not unfrequently of half an acre. As these trees forked very soon, and as there was no underbush beneath, the heavy drapery of the moss hung drooping as from a low-roofed temple of the Druids; and the thick green sward spread under it, mellowed the gray shades deliciously. The trees became gradually smaller and more sparse, as the eye descended to the valleys, and then in the centre of each was a stripe of prairie of the deepest verdure, open to the sun, which produced the illusion of a gold and emerald flood, stilly creeping beneath the grim towering shadows. A few small trees were scattered along the feet of the ridges a short distance out into our prairie. We were all

entranced into gazing upon this marvellous scene, which opened in new traits of surpassing loveliness and grandeur as we approached.

The awed silence which had fallen round the party was broken by a quick, vehement exclamation of the Doctor,—“Egad! there they are! I’m into ’em, boys!” and away he dashed, with “bobtail” at his best speed, and flourishing the spear above his head!

Looking around in astonishment for the cause of this sudden outbreak, I saw the whole party bending forward in the act of letting out their horses, while their eyes were strained with a half eager, half comic look after the Doctor. Following the same direction, I could distinguish, three or four hundred yards ahead, several black, unwieldy-looking objects, that seemed to be rooting in the long grass, just at the foot of one of the low knobs, and a little distance out in the prairie. One of them raised its head at the moment, and I saw that it was a bear! Hays exclaimed, as he spurred his horse—“Boys, we’re lucky! They come down to feed on the snails!” At the same moment the company broke off like madmen. I followed, but having been pre-occupied, and less on the alert, was soon among the hindmost.

The valiant Doctor had between fifty and eighty rods the start of us. His fiery little pony carried him straight up to the nearest bear, which stood upon its hind feet stupidly snuffing the air, evidently greatly puzzled what to make of these new visitors! The gallant Æsculapian dashed up to it, and was raising his spear to strike, before the astonished animal had concluded to turn tail, which, when it did, it waddled off with great speed. But, as the Doctor drove away manfully at its shaggy back with his weapon, in his eagerness he had ridden so close, that pony, too, entering into the spirit of

the affair, was biting with great vigour at its haunches.

Such a combination of assailants was too much for Bruin's patience, and it wheeled so suddenly, that, before pony could dodge, it had given him a wipe with its tremendous paws which brought him to his knees. This unexpected stoppage, of course sent the Doctor vaulting over the head of his beast. His dumpy figure looked so natural, so much like the old trick, as it went sprawling through the air, that one universal yell of laughter broke impulsively from every throat in spite of the imminent peril of his predicament!

Happily for the Doctor, the pony, as the largest object, distracted the attention of the bear from him for an instant, and gave him time to regain his feet, and make for a low live oak which stood near. Into this he mounted with inconceivable nimbleness, but the bear was close at his heels. He ran out upon a limb, but the inexorable monster still pursued. He finally got out as far as the limb would sustain his weight, and there he stood, swayed to and fro in the air, holding on with one hand to the branches above him, while with the other he was pushing away most vehemently at the bear's nose with his spear, endeavouring to keep it at a respectful distance. This arrangement Bruin did not seem to feel disposed to agree to, but was cautiously and slowly pushing his way out on the limb, for the purpose of making a closer acquaintance. To complete the picture, pony was prancing, stamping his feet, looking up into the tree and whining most furiously, as if he fully appreciated his master's danger, and was eager to get up to the rescue.

The whole scene occupied but a few seconds. The foremost of the party, seeing the Doctor mount the tree, had galloped on, laughing, in pursuit of the other bears;

while we were so much convulsed with merriment, that I verily believe the creature might have eaten the poor fellow whole, before any of us would have recovered sufficiently to shoot, but for the interposition of Hays. He, by a great exertion of his remarkable self-command, so far recovered as to be able to send a ball through its head, which brought it to the ground.

There were now four bears in sight, which were making for the Knobs, and seeing that the Doctor was safe, without pausing we all swept by in headlong career, to arrest these fellows before they left the plain. The last I saw of the Doctor for many a day, he was dangling from the end of that live oak limb, in the act of driving his spear into the body of the wounded bear, while pony, with his ears laid back, was kicking most vehemently at its writhing body!

The intensity of individual excitement was all now given to the chase. Our party had broken up into four groups, each of which had selected for pursuit one of the unwieldy brutes, who were getting over the ground with astonishing speed in a direct line for the Knobs. We pushed them so hard, though, that instead of attempting to ascend the ridges, they all diverged into some one of the narrow valleys I have spoken of. It happened that a young Virginian and myself had selected the same animal, and, before we entered the gorge, up which he ran, all the others of the party had disappeared into gorges of the same character, which led them to the opposite sides of the ridges. I now began to notice, for the first time, that there was trouble brewing with my horse. He had caught scent of the bear, and seemed to be terribly alarmed, snorting and bouncing up from the ground with a short, stiff spring, that almost jerked me out of my seat. Though his natural action was fully as great as that of the Virginian's horse, yet he, some-

how or other, contrived not to get over much ground, and would not keep up. His manœuvres made me feel a little curious, though I am, and was then, a practical horseman.

I saw my companion closing upon the bear, which suddenly diverged from the valley, up the hill, and lost sight of both behind an immense live oak hung to the very ground with moss. In another instant he had fired two shots in quick succession. The idea of losing my shot entirely, made me desperate, and reining the horse's head with all my strength, I plunged the spurs furiously into his flanks.

Three or four frantic bounds, and he had brushed through the dense moss curtain under the live oak, and came through on the other side within five paces of the object of his terror—the bear, the loins of which had been broken by the two shots, and it was swaying its huge carcass to and fro, and gaping its great red mouth with roars.

Had my horse been suddenly turned to stone, he would not have been more rigid than he became the instant his feet touched the earth. There was something positively awful in the paralysis of fright which seized him. His skin had been perfectly dry, and, in a second, big drops had started, running off to the ground. His legs were set and stiff; his nostrils prodigiously distended, but motionless; his eyes shot out, and fixed, in the fascination of terror, upon the hideous object. I was shocked. I drove my spurs into him with redoubled strength, wrenching at the bit at the same time. His head felt like a rock, and only a slight quiver of the muscles answered the spur. I fairly yelled with rage as I struck him over the head with my gun-barrel. The blow sounded dull and heavy, but there was no motion,



“Just as the Virginian was levelling his pistol for a third shot, our attention was arrested by the stunning clamour, which has only to be heard once to be remembered for ever, of the Comanche war-whoop!”—Page 191.

not even of an ear. I never felt so strangely in my life. I was frightened myself.

At this instant—for all had passed in an instant—just as the Virginian was levelling his pistol for a third shot, our attention was arrested by the quick succession of firing, like a platoon, from the other side of the ridge, followed up by the stunning clamour—which has only to be heard once to be remembered for ever—of the Comanche war-whoop; and then, above us, the heavy tramp and rush of a troop descending the hill directly towards us. There was no time for deliberation. “The Indians! take care of yourself, Kentuck!” hastily exclaimed my companion, as he wheeled his horse and dashed down the hill for the valley. Cold comfort that—“take care of yourself,” indeed!

I made one more desperate and unavailing effort to break the trance of the vile brute I strode, then sprang from his back, ran under the drooping moss, stepped up into the live oak, the forks of which were not over three feet from the ground, ran along up one of its massive limbs, and had barely time to conceal myself behind a dense cluster of the moss, when, with deafening whooping, a bronzed and feather-bedizened crew of some twenty Comanches swept into the valley just beneath me. They paused for an instant on seeing my horse, who was standing as I left him, and one of them took the lariat from the saddle-bow; but just then they caught sight of the flying Virginian, and, with a yell that made the very leaves shiver, dashed on in pursuit of him.

This broke the spell upon my Mustang, and, with a sudden start and shrill neigh, he plunged wildly through the crowd, dragging the warrior who held the lariat from his seat, and nearly unhorsing two or three others; then, as if the very fiends were lashing him with red-

hot steel, he flew, rather than ran, out of the valley into the plains, neighing louder than the savages howled, till he was out of sight. In a little while, they, too, had disappeared; a gun or two followed at momentary intervals, and then the echoes faded into pulseless and oppressive silence, broken only by the sobbing moans of the wounded bear beneath me.

I was stupified. These events were so strange, and had followed each other so rapidly, that I was dizzy and utterly confounded. Was it enchanted land? Here was I, three hundred miles beyond the remotest outskirts of civilization, perched in a tree; my horse gone; friends scattered or scalped; this infernal silence weighing upon my lungs. No! There is the dismal moan again! I must go down and stop that, or it'll run me crazy, sure enough! Ha! ha! this is a funny joke! what a laugh I'll have with the fellows when we all get together again! Oh! they have all hid as I have done, and we will all meet out there at the mouth of the gorge after awhile!

Pooh! the Fates merely mean to try my nerves! Curse that moaning! I must go down and kill that bear. Pity to kill him, too; it's a sort of companionship! Doleful friends we'll be! Confound it—if it wouldn't whine so piteously I could stand it! Pshaw! the fellows will be here directly, and what will they say to find I have been so unmanned by a little silence, that I could not finish a wounded bear, when I came all this way to hunt it? So down I went. The great monster, I found, was too far gone to be savage. He merely stared at me through half-closed eyes, then tossed his head about, gaped his jaws, and moaned. I went close up to him. I wanted him to show fight, and excite me. It looked like cold-blooded murder to kill him so, and we the only live things near; but he wouldn't notice me.

His back was broken, and he had enough to occupy him. Wouldn't it be merciful to put him out of pain? Yes! but who's going to be merciful to me when I'm starving, after my ammunition gives out! I felt jealous of the bear's good luck, in having me there with a large knife to kill him at once!

All my logic wouldn't do. Sophise as I might, the awful conviction was settling about my brain that the party had been hopelessly scattered, and that I was left alone, with no experience to guide me back, and no hope of getting back on foot if I had possessed experience. But it wouldn't do to let this feeling gain the ascendant. I must have something to employ me. They *might* come yet.

So I deliberately split the bear's skull open with my bowie-knife, and went to work very formally to dissect him. I managed to protract this operation to such a length, that, when I looked up, I was surprised to find that the sun was setting. But I had no longer to complain of the stillness. This was the signal for the voices of the wilderness to break forth.

A long, screeching cry, that seemed right at my ear, made my blood curdle. I looked around. The limbs of a live oak near were rustling and swaying, as under some great weight. The head of a panther peered out from between two bunches of moss. We looked at each other very coolly. He stretched his white throat from the covert, turned up his nose, and snuffed towards me. He smelt the blood. His eyes were very large and gleaming, but he looked innocent enough; his face seemed so good-natured and familiar, that I felt for the moment we must be old acquaintances—that I ought to offer to take his paw. There's no harm in him!

He stretched his jaws to scream again, and I saw his long white fangs: the cat tribe are well furnished

about the jaws. But, horror! his cry has a dozen echoes all around, far away and near. What a caterwauling! God of heaven! it is said they like man's meat the best. Oh! but these are simple boors, uncontaminated by luxurious tastes. They won't know any better, unless they have heard the tradition. But then, it is something of a risk if they haven't. What shall I do? Shoot that meek-looking panther in the eyes? Dead panthers tell no tales!

No; the Indians will hear the gun, and I shall have them swarming through the ridges to-morrow sky-larking. That won't do. What then? Why, I'll climb to the top of this live oak, so that these nimble gentry can't get above me, unless they jump out of the moon; and I'll tie myself up there, and swing about till morning. So long as I'm above 'em, I'm safe; for I can see their eyes as they come up, and rake down the limb.

This conclusion was forthwith acted upon. I didn't like that panther to stand there watching me, though, for he would be sure to tell, and I should be besieged all night; so I picked up some round pebbles that were strewed along the hill side, and took deliberate aim at his broad, innocent face. The first one cut the moss just above his head. He looked up, with a quick movement and low growl, evidently wondering prodigiously where it came from. He had no suspicion of me at all, and looked down again very friendly and very inquisitively.

I tried it again. This time I struck the limb near him, and the stroke rang sharply. He clapped his paw over the place, clawed it, and smelt. The simple fellow didn't look at me at all. I felt almost ashamed to be imposing upon him so. But while he was thus engaged, I sent another: this whistled past him on the other side.

He wheeled and clawed at the sound. At last I struck him, plumb! He saw the pebble fall, and go rolling down the hill; with a savage growl, he leaped out of the tree after it, and went chasing it down into the valley. It was clear he thought the place bewitched; for he didn't come back again until it had grown quite dark, if he came even then.

I took some of the choicer pieces of the bear and hung them to a swinging limb, where they would be out of reach, and then ascended the live oak. I climbed and climbed, until I got so high, that, by standing straight, I could look out above the top, and see the stars twinkling in a very sleepy sort of fashion, as if they had been called up too early, and had not decided whether they should wake at all yet a while.

The moon was just wheeling up her chaste disc from behind the mountains. They all looked too much like old times to be pleasant just then; so I dodged my head beneath the shade of the moss again, and made my arrangements with the most accommodating forks for the night. That settled, I went to sleep counting the answers to the nearest panther's cry, guessing how many there were to the acre; or conjecturing whether wolves learned to howl by gamut, and how many quavers made their endless bars; or wondering whether "rattle! rattle! snap! snap!" was considered a legitimate chorus to "tu whit! tu whoo!" by the San Saba owls.

I got tired conjecturing about the owls, for they seemed to have taken that matter in hand with regard to me, and came flapping and hooting about the tree tops, and shining their great eyes curiously at me, as they went by, till I almost foamed with spite, because I couldn't punch them out. The moon got up over head at last, and that narrow little valley, which looked

so pretty in the morning sunshine, now lay along the deep bosom of the shadow, in the light, braiding them like a silver ribbon. Those graceful little creatures stepping across it—one, two, three—they are ocelots, spotted like a pard. What a carouse is going on down there over that bear's carcass. The brutes are about to hold a carnival here to-night, in celebration of my release from the thralldom and restraints of civilization. Confound 'em, if they hadn't such rakish ways about them, I would come down and do the "honours" for them genteelly, as a civil host should! Can't trust 'em, though. How their eyes do sparkle and flash green flames, as they spit and claw at each other over the bones. The panther rules the roost down there. I wonder if the puma is going to come.

I wish he would. There'll be rare scintillating fireworks from their eyes should they get to battling. I suppose I should see all the cat family by the light, sitting on their haunches around, connoisseuring. That would be funny, for they are a sober, demure-looking generation. Look at that pack of wolves sitting off there in the moonlight. How they fidget, and whine, and lick their chops. They dare not come nearer! Good for them, the sneaking grave-robbers! Those panthers are gleaming their eyes up this way. Have they scented? Can it be they suspect? There go the gleams shooting up. What can it mean? Ha! the greedy rogue! He is jumping up at the tit-bits that I hung on a limb. He's welcome to them if he can get them—if that'll satisfy him so far that he won't attempt to make tit-bits out of me.

Daylight has come at last, and, as the coast is clear, I'll go down. A pretty muss they seem to have made of it. Fur, and blood, and bones! That salient thief did get my tit-bits, sure enough. Well, it is said there

is such a thing as starving possible! I suppose I am beginning to feel something like the premonitories. I have tasted nothing since daylight yesterday morning; but they say an empty stomach for long wind, and I am likely to need all the wind I can raise before I get across this prairie. Some of the boys will be in sight though, by the time I reach the mouth of the gorge. It can't be that they are all scalped, and they must know that I am here. Oh yes, I shall see them, and what a laugh we'll have comparing roosts.

I set off down the valley, reached the prairie, strained my eye over the desolate expanse, and not a living thing was to be seen. I went to the tree where I left the Doctor dangling: the wolves had stripped the bones of the bear, and were still lingering around them. That immortal spear was sticking between the ribs, where he had driven it, no doubt, with splenetic vigour. I looked around for some trace of his bones, but none were to be seen.

I climbed the tree to the topmost bough, and strained my eyes till they ached again. Wide and terrible solitude: not an insect chirped, not a leaf stirred. The pulses of my heart sounded like the throes of a mountain: I began to imagine it the centre of all vitality—the only thing that throbbed and felt beneath the sun; and that His great fire burnt alone for me. Pity that one couldn't live on beams, as they say the poets do!

I will not starve, I fairly screamed; life is strong in me, and where the wolf lives, I can live. I'll be subtler than the serpent. My scent shall be keener than the sleuth-hound's, my sight than the vulture's. I'll run swifter than the deer. I will wrestle hand to claw with the prairie wolf, that I may tear out his heart to eat. Die by inches? Not I. I'll set the prairie on fire to

beacon the Comanches, and dare them to battle for my scalp, or give me food.

I slid out of the tree, and threw myself upon the grass. Long I lay there, half stupified; my blood raging and brain whirling with fearful images. A solitary raven "tolled in his hollow beak," and aroused me. I knew it was one of the "ill birds," though I had never seen or heard one before. I looked up. It sat upon the oak just over me, and the limbs were swaying with its weight. It "tolled" that "sick man's requiem" again, then turned its head aside and stared, with "grave inquisition" in its black, glittering eyes, down upon me. You've come too soon, you ebony wizard! Not dead yet, I thank you! and I stared at its carnal glance. Its gray, scaly legs had stains upon them—hairs were clotted on its claws, and the fellow had not even wiped his sharp, wedge-like beak clean.

Think how slovenly, when he came to offer the services of the instrument to pick my eyes out! What wonder I felt indignant, and the life began to wake up in me again. I did not want him go! It was a ghastly companionship, but then I had always felt strangely curious about them, for they are wonderful creatures. They live where nothing else can be seen to live—out in the trackless desert—vast wildernesses of desolation—where even the clouds have fled away, and there is nothing but the sky and sun above, and sands and rocks beneath; the winnow of their black wings stirs the dead air, and their harsh, sepulchral croak, startles the torpid echoes from a sleep of ages. "He that feedeth the young ravens!" I felt now the striking sublimity of that figure.

Dark-plumed spirit of the desolation, in what grim wild hast thou thy home? Thou hast snuffed the slaughter from afar, and been coursing with death

around the world. Yet there are wide throats gaping with ravin in that foul nest of thine. How dost thou live, and how are they fed while thou art crossing continents, the mate of famine? Waugh! waugh! woo-a-ugh! he "tolled" again, and spread his black wings and flapped indignantly away! The omen of his coming is not ill to me; where he goes there must be *something* to live upon.

It is no miracle that gives refreshing to these tireless wings. Ha! I have it. The snails! Hays said the bears came down to feed upon them. I rose, with new hope, examined the ground about me, and, to my great joy found, scattered here and there over the surface, quite a number of snails, some of them as large as my thumb. Ah, ha! I said, I shall not starve! and a gleam of exultant triumph shot through my inmost soul.

These snails, that ghostly-eyed, jolly old croaker has helped me to, will last so long as the sterility and the sand continue. What a fool I was to have lain there mumbling like a toothless crone, who pleads with death for one hour more of palsied life, when my veins are full of life! I am strong, and there is enough to eat scattered over the earth. A child could hardly ask for more! I soon collected enough to make a meal. Oh, ye epicures, tell me not of your crustaceous delicacies, out of the deep sea. Snails—snails that grow upon the sands for me; though they *are* rather light food for a walk of three hundred miles, it must be confessed.

Being refreshed in my inner man, I looked at matters very coolly. The plain must be crossed; it lay between me and life; and the sooner the attempt was made the better. So I girded up my loins and started towards the sunrise. All that I knew about the course was, that we came west, and therefore east must be the direction back.

There were no objects to assist me in keeping the right line. I must walk with my shadow behind me in the morning, and before me in the evening, looking steadily at the horizon, my gaze fixed upon some slight feature, a wave or curve of its contour just under the sun. All day long I walked with my eyes fixed on something, which turned out to be nothing that could be distinguished from the vast level plain around when I reached it. Yet, I felt that I had kept the line, and that was a great deal. I had always to stop before it grew dark, to look for snails and water. For a day or two the snails were abundant, and I came to water at least once a day, but then they both began to grow scarce. The gnawings and parchings of hunger and thirst commenced at the same time. I could no longer keep my course steadily, for my eyes must be employed all the while in looking for food and water. A herd of mustangs would go by now and then, stop a moment to shake their silky manes, snort, and stare in startled wonder, and then sweep on before I could approach within a gun shot. The deer would rise lazily from their couches of "knot-grass, dew be-sprent," prick their ears, toss their slight heads, whistle, and bound away. The awkward cranes would stalk to and fro, gesticulate with their long necks, and croak; then stop, spread their broad wings, and go with their long shanks dangling behind them. But I could never kill them; for, though hunger made me reckless at last, and I could fire, I would hear the shot rattle among their thick feathers: but it availed nothing. They still sailed croaking off.

These were the only living things, except "horned frogs," that I saw; and while my strength held out, I would chase the last, nimble, ugly little creatures, with an eagerness inconceivable. Yes, there were wolves,

too; but they are minions of the devil, not honest, living things. Some of them were on my trail all the time, determined to be in at the death. Oh, how fiercely I hated them. I tried all manner of devices to lure them within gun-shot, but it was of no avail. They were too subtle. The hairy ghouls! they have the "second sight." They can see death before he strikes, and they will slink and creep with horrid patience in his wake, for one lap of blood. It would make me shiver to turn and see them, like my shadow, for ever trailing me. And then at night they would sit around and howl and moan for hours and hours, as if they were determined I should learn my own requiem by heart!

Snails and water were becoming yet more difficult to obtain, and I grew weaker and weaker every hour. Still I travelled on, though my gait was staggering. I had drawn my hungerbelt, until I looked like a wasp. My senses became painfully acute. The clang of a crane's wing, or his croak as he rose, would thump and crash against my tympanum like thunder, and roar through my brain in reverberations for minutes after. The earth's smell became rank and oppressive; and when the breeze swept by, it sounded like the whirring of ten thousand wings. I began to see strange sights on the prairie. Armies with banners would hurtle by, and their tread would shake the earth. It would turn out to be a flying troop of mustangs. Great lakes of water would glimmer in the sun before me, and when I would reel along a little faster to reach them, they would still travel on, and I could not lessen the distance between them and me.

The star-beams hurt me with their icy keenness, and the moon's light made my teeth chatter; mist-forms of those I loved would sail along the air, solemnly and slow, their still eyes fixed on me. The wail of the ac-

cursed wolves would sound like the clamouring volume of agonies rolled up from a teeming bell-pick, or the moaning of a northern ocean through cavernous icebergs. The blood tingled sharply and stung along my veins; while my stomach was cold as if it were dead. I felt as if I were cut in two, and my head and feet acting from different volitions. At night, I would lie with my mouth open and my tongue out, gasping for the dew. I would eat the grass like a beast, before the sun had dried it.

Yet I travelled on, for while I was in motion, I felt the horrors less; and sometimes my body seemed to drink in unnatural vigour from the atmosphere, giving me ecstatic visions. The most delicious moments of my life would crowd upon me, bringing all familiar faces, wearing the expression I loved best to remember them by. But they were spiritualized, and seemed to be the angels of old joys; and they looked with such pitying tenderness into my eyes, that tears would gush from them in hot torrents. And then all mirthful phantasies would dance and gleam about me, in such quaint shapes of sparkling beauty, that I would laugh aloud, and stretch my arms to clasp, that I might kiss them. But when, from sheer exhaustion, I was compelled to lie down, then the awful hell of torture would commence to rage within me; and famine would tear and wrench at my vitals. Thirst, fiery thirst, would seethe, and boil, and shoot like electric flame along my veins.

In this condition I had been moving along like one in a dreadful dream, for two days, and yet no alleviation. I still clung to my gun; but, merciful heavens! how heavy it had become. It felt like Goliath's beam; sunk into my flesh, and seemed to be crushing the very bones. Yet I would not give it up. I could not bear the thought of being killed without the opportunity of

revenge. It would have been a glorious happiness to have met the Comanches, and died defiant. Those fiend-whelps, the wolves, to have them snarling their white fangs over me, while I was yet alive, was too horrible.

I had almost lost the capability of further wrestling with inevitable fate, when I suddenly noticed on the prairie before me, that which appeared like a cluster of trees. I was strong again in an instant. My feet seemed to be shod with some buoyant principle. "Water! water! water!" my parched lips articulated at every step. As I approached, I could perceive there were other "motts" scattered at wide intervals of miles in a line across the plain. This I knew indicated the presence of a stream; and oh, what a thrill of hope, for I was humbled now, it sent through my weakened frame.

In an hour I reached the nearest "mott,"—a cluster of scrubby timber, covering about thirty square feet—and I almost screamed with eager delight, as I saw from the gully on which it stood, the gleam of water. I dropped my gun, tumbled down the bank, threw myself prostrate on the brink, and plunged my head up to the shoulders in the clear fluid. I gulped several huge rapid swallows on the instant; but when I paused for breath—horror of horrors!—Great God! it was as salt as brine! It all came up in an instant, and it was like tearing out my vitals. The blackness of darkness came around my brain. I was insensible.

I cannot tell how long I lay there, but I fell with a portion of my body in the water, and this revived me. I waked to consciousness, with my brain clearer than it had been for several days. I felt that the game was all up now, and a strange calmness took possession of me. I smiled even, to think what a wild feverish struggle I had gone through to preserve a boon so utterly worthless as

life now seemed—and how foolishly obstreperous and bitter I had been about things that now appeared as mere conventional whimsicalities! To die! why it is a sweet, a glorious prospect! What was life without the joy and happiness of dying? To die of starvation! It will be deliciously pleasant, as being lulled to sleep by the roundelay of home.

Strange! I never thought of God now but as a name; it was an inevitable law of being I obeyed, gladly and meekly! The fancy took possession of me that I wanted to lie down on the green moss under the trees. I must make one more effort to get there. I attempted to crawl, but was too weak, and fell! I lay for some time, and still that fancy haunted me so singularly, that my powerless limbs regained a partial vigour; I crawled on my hands and knees up the bank. It took me a long time to do this. I felt as if it was my last duty, and desperately I struggled to accomplish it. I passed my gun, and dragged it along with me. I thought of the wolves, and wanted to go to sleep in peace.

I reached the mott. There was one bright green spot, under the largest tree, in the centre. That's the place. It will be a lovely couch. I managed to reach it, and stretched myself upon my back, with my gun by my side, and my head resting on a cushion of moss near the root. My eyes were closed. An indescribable sense of weakness pervaded my being. I felt that I should never rise from that place again. But I was happy. The agony was over; the "fitful fever" had grown calm, and was slowly sinking me to rest. The loved faces of that far away home came around me for the farewell. Others stooped from the clouds and beckoned and smiled for me to come on. They wore wings—oh, how I longed to be with them. It was a pleasant trance. I felt that I should never lose sight of them again: that before

many hours I should feel myself, buoyant as they, rise up from the damp earth, and float away towards the stars. A sunbeam, struggling through the leaves, fell on my closed lips, and shocked me back to earth again. I opened my eyes for one more look at the glad sun and beautiful earth. I looked up.

Directly above me, within six feet of my face, crouching close to the body of the tree, was a large Fox-squirrel. The instant my eye fell upon it, I felt that I had been reprieved, and life and all its objects rushed back upon my heart again. Not a shadow of an idea crossed my mind that there was even a possibility of the creature escaping me. I felt as well assured that I should get back to Bexar, and home, as if I had already been sitting in the old rocking chair. I lay perfectly still several minutes, watching it breathe, and thinking how its poor life had been given for mine. I had been too weak to raise my hand before, now I slowly, and with care, lifted my gun with one hand, without changing my position at all, raised it without aim, for I felt I couldn't miss it, and fired. It fell upon my breast. I sat up, drew my knife, cut it up deliberately, and ate as much as I cared at once, raw! and then, with the prayer of faith, of thanksgiving, and of praise, sunk back, and was sound asleep in a moment.

I slept for twenty-four hours, as near as I can judge. On waking I finished the remainder of the squirrel, and felt quite able to walk again; though, on attempting to rise, I staggered sorely for awhile. But the conviction that I should meet with no further difficulty, had become a matter of such positive certainty, that I never dreamed of a doubt.

In about two hours I saw two men on horseback, herding a drove of cattle. I was not surprised. I expected something of the sort. The men rode towards

me. I saw they were Mexicans. I knew there was nothing to expect from these traitorous wretches, by fair means, so I concealed my gun by running it up my hunting shirt, and waited for them to come within range. They approached very cautiously, and when they were within thirty paces of me, I drew my gun suddenly forth and brought it to bear upon them. They were desperately frightened, and would have wheeled and galloped off, but something in my look showed that I was not joking. I ordered them up to me, dismounted the one on the best horse, took his seat, waved my hand in adieu to the chopfallen-looking scoundrels, who had expected to plunder me, and galloped off.

The motion of the horse was dreadful. I remember dropping the bridle, and seizing the high pommel with both hands, while the horse dashed off towards the eastward, at the top of his speed. The next thing I remember was being lifted off by the Rangers at the door of Johnson's, in the square of Bexar. I heard some of them say, "Poor fellow! I thought it was his ghost."

The days were a blank then for several weeks. My next waking was in a pleasant room, in bed, with the little Doctor bending anxiously over me. I was safe—the crisis was past! The Doctor had been wounded, and was now a spare, thin little body. I supposed *he*, too, had seen his troubles.

It appeared that the body of Comanches had been very large. They had attacked the different detachments of our scattered party, very nearly at the same time, and so entirely dispersed it, that not more than two ever got together again. Two men had been killed, and several others wounded. Hays had saved the Doctor's life, with the faithful aid of pony. All had a

nard time coming in ; but my case was rather the most desperate.

The sagacious critic will no doubt smile at the importance I have attached to these simple incidents. He is free to sneer—they are *facts*, and the most remarkable under the circumstances that ever came under my observation. This “mott” was not more than thirty feet square ; the trees dwarfish, and none of them nut-bearing. It was fully six miles, above and below, to the other motts, and they were not so large as this one, and were thirty miles from any other timber.

The sterile prairie produced nothing which I could perceive to be natural food for such an animal as the fox-squirrel. It may have been migrating, but they generally do so in large numbers, keeping near the water ; there was none in this region. How the creature got there, and how it lived, will always be a positive mystery to me. The impression made by this combination of singular circumstances—the fact of its being there *at all*—then of my seeing it, just at the crisis when I thought I was dying—its crouching so close to me as to make it matter of impossibility almost for me to fail of killing it, even in my feeble condition,—all together, it can never fade from my memory.

CHAPTER VII.

HUNTING PECCARIES IN TEXAS—A BEAR HUNT
INTERRUPTED BY PECCARIES.

Characteristics of American wild animals—Their alleged want of courage—True explanation of the matter—Influence of fire-arms—The Peccary, its appearance, habits, and characteristics—An adventure with peccaries—A bear-hunt—A fix in a cane brake—Attack by the peccaries, and retreat of the hunters.

NATURALISTS are very fond of calling our American animals cowardly. This sweeping statement is only a partial truth; and I, for one, have got tired of hearing it reiterated. The animals of this continent were originally just as ferocious towards man,—if that's what they call bravery, and the fear of him cowardice!—as were any of the most formidable of the eastern hemisphere, in proportion to the size and strength of the races.

Our forefathers, with their terrible rifles in hand, found our wild beasts quite sufficiently disposed, for their comfort, to dispute ascendancy with them in the land. They had been accustomed to grapple with the Red man, armed only as he was with lance and bow, and in these conflicts, the animals were by no means unfrequently the conquerors. Now they are compelled to battle with a new and invisible power—an agent as mysterious in its operations, as it is terrible in its effects—which, as it overawed and intimidated their ancient

foes, the Red men, might well be expected to fill them with the panic of an indefinable dread.

The growth of this wholesome fear has been very gradual and slow. The rifle had driven them from frontier to frontier of all the older States, before any marked change in their respect for the *genus homo* began to be apparent.

The Panther, which at first made fight with the hunter wherever he met him, had learned to be more circumspect, and instead of becoming the assailant, and leaping from the limb whereon he crouched above, down on his foe below, was content to let him pass, and stand entirely upon the defensive; even the black bear, who formerly had been notorious for his unceremonious habit of pushing his cold nose into whatever he might perceive going on before him, be the actors who they might, became almost a proverb of prudence. The wild cat, who sometimes lost his temper in love-making time, and challenged any buck-skinned intruder he might meet on the war-path for a fight hand to claw, now contented himself with "giving the road" as his sagacious nostrils recognized the smell of gunpowder ahead.

Now these changes should not by any means be stigmatized as the result of cowardice, but be honourably set down to the credit of a cautious reasoning: they had found an enemy armed with an agency, the nature or effects of which they could neither comprehend nor counteract; they therefore wisely concluded to avoid it—just as any other logical thinkers, reasoning from experience, would have done.

However, let any of those believers in the cowardice of our wild animals, even at this late day, venture into the fastnesses of the Dismal Swamp, or any of those enormous cane-brakes locked up within the sluggish embrace of the bayous of the Mississippi, and propose

to shake hands with the first panther he meets, or offer the fraternal hug to bruin, and he will see what a reception he will find?—let him be armed with as many guns and pistols as he can carry, I'll engage he will need to make the most of them, the first time he comes within spring of a panther, or treads on the tail (?) of a bear.

The fact is, the introduction of fire-arms, in modifying the face of the whole globe, physically as well as morally and mentally, has not failed, of course, in its effects upon savage animals as well as savage men. If it has thundered civilization or extermination into the ears of one, it has also detonated circumspection into the ears of the other.

Before the East India conquests of the British had introduced fire-arms in the East, the bold and open ravages of lions, tigers, and other wild beasts, were frequently carried to such a formidable extent, that whole villages of the imbecile natives were depopulated by a single animal, to destroy which armies had to be assembled; and even these have been beaten back from the jungles, without effecting their object more than partially. When British officers first commenced lion and tiger hunting, it was considered the most dangerous sport in the world; and the records and correspondence of that period teem with fearful tales of bloody deaths at the horrid jaws of those animals. At that time, the tiger, without hesitation, attacked large parties of men, leaping into their midst from the jungle, and carrying off a victim without regard to epaulettes or colour: while the lion charged boldly into camps, seizing men, or other dainties that happened to suit his taste.

In hunting on elephants, it was so exceedingly rare to find one who would charge a jungle after the scent of the tiger had reached him, that such an animal commanded the highest prices. Now the tables are so en-

tirely turned, that we never hear of any one being carried off by these animals, whether native or not, except in the remote interior of the forests of Bengal and Africa, into which the heavy and formidable rifle of the British sportsman has not yet carried its ounce-ball terrors; while hunting on elephants has become a sport, attended with so little danger, that even the placid nerves of a clerk from Threadneedle-street may now venture to partake of the indulgence, fortified with a little cotton stuffed in his ears to drown the roars of the brute, and a little sal volatile to stay his spirits when the blood begins to flow.

The dreaded tiger now skulks in caves and deepest jungles, until frightened forth by the maddening and incessant play of rockets, grenades, and every other species of torturing fire-works. While the lordly lion waits behind the bush for the assault of his foes, and is not known to charge, even until several times wounded. In yielding to the mastery man has thus established, these animals have lost nothing of their original characteristics, except so far as their relations to him are concerned—and in this the difference is rather, as we have before remarked, to man the mechanical intelligence, than to man the animal.

Nor are these gradual ameliorations of temper and habits, so far as mankind are concerned, confined to quadrupeds alone—birds, and all other creatures, partake of them, in degrees proportioned to their intelligence. It is notorious how soon game birds, and the whole family of rapacious birds, learn to distinguish a man with a gun from a man without a gun, and with such sagacity will they do this, too, that we are seldom able to surprise them, by any stratagem of concealed weapons.

And yet the white-headed eagle remains the white-

headed eagle, so far as its relations to the rest of the world are concerned. It continues to thrash the vultures, to make them disgorge their food—robs the fish-hawk of his shining prey with just as splendid audacity as ever, and continues with quite as ferocious acuteness to tear out the eyes of any wounded deer or buffalo cow that it may perceive go aside from the herd.

But, all rules have their exceptions—and it was to treat concerning one of these exceptions, that this chapter has been written. Certainly, however much other wild animals may have yielded to the awful supremacy of that dread machine, behind which man has entrenched his physical inferiority, the Peccary cannot be accused of the same weakness; for, of a verity, it does seem to me that if those same formidable tubes were to pour forth the thunders and fires of Hecla itself, instead of the respectable little volcano of which they at present can boast, the belching of this huge and noisy chaos would only increase the irate valour of this curious little animal. It seems to be entirely insensible to all those sudden influences, the unexpected supervention of which is sure to cause panic in other beasts. Ungovernable rage seems to take the place of this panic—a rage quite as headlong and as blind. Though scarcely more than eighteen inches high by two and a half feet in length, it is yet, really, one of the most formidable animals belonging to our hemisphere. It is gregarious, and goes in droves of from ten to fifty. Its jaws are armed, after the manner of the wild boar, with tusks, but they are of very different shape, and if possible more to be dreaded. They stand straight in the jaws, instead of curving upwards, and have the form as well as keenness of the lancet blade. Their motions are as quick as lightning, and with shoulders, head and neck possessing extraordinary muscular power, they manage

to slash and gash in the most horrible manner with these villanous little weapons, which are only about an inch and a half in length. As they do not hesitate to attack anything or any body, big or little, provocation or no provocation, that may chance to cross their paths, men and animals very soon learn that their only safety is in flight. As they rush upon the object in a body, and fight until the last of their number is slain, it is fruitless to stop and battle with them, as they would cut either a man or the largest animal, so badly, before they could all be despatched, that the victory would prove a dear one indeed.

There is no wild animal that will stop to fight them, and men, dogs, and horses, run from them in the most ridiculous consternation—indeed, they are the very terror of hunters.

This droll creature seems to be exactly the intermediate between the family of hedge-hogs, and that of the wild boar, or common hog. Its general form, so far as the body is concerned, resembles rather more that of the hedge-hog, while its hair, which is about the average length of the bristles of the common hog, is thinly set in a rough skin, and flattened and sharp, as are the spines of the hedge-hog, and of the same bony consistence in appearance, though so thin as not to be prickly to the touch, except very slightly, when erected—as they always are if the animal is enraged, after the manner of the whole family of porcupines. These thin spines, or hairs, are also parti-coloured—being barred with the muddy white and bluish chocolate, producing the general effect of a roan—they are destitute of a tail (excepting merely a fleshy protuberance,) in common with the hedge-hog, and have that curious gland which is vulgarly called the “navel on the back.” They have no appearance of the navel underneath; and this depression

of the spine, which is directly over the loin, looks more like a navel than anything else, though it contains a deposit of a certain musk, which the animal gives forth when excited, and which assimilates it again with the civet-cat of the East. Its shoulders, neck, and head resemble the wild boar quite closely in conformation, though the outline, of course, is much more delicate, and sharpened at the snout. Its legs and feet, also, are much like those of the boar. Its food partakes of the character of that of both the boar and the hedge-hog, consisting of mast, wild fruits, grains, grasses, shoots of cane, roots, herbs, reptiles, etc.

But, with all its other peculiarities to answer for, the drollest is yet to come. I refer to their mode of sleeping. They usually frequent those heavy cane-brakes, through which are scattered, at wide intervals, trees of enormous size and age. These, from their isolated condition, are most exposed to the fury of storms, and, therefore, most liable to be thrown down. We find their giant stems stretched here and there, through the cane brakes of Texas, overgrown with the densest thickets of the cane, matted together by strong and thorny vines. In these old trees the Peccaries find their favourite lodgings. Into one of these logs a drove of twenty or thirty of them will enter at night, each one backing in, so that the last one entering stands with his nose at the entrance. The planters, who dread them and hate them—as well on account of the ravages on their grain crops which they commit, the frequent destruction or mutilation by them of their stock, their favourite dogs, and sometimes horses even, as on account of the ridiculous predicaments, such as taking to a tree, or running for dear life, etc., to which they have been subjected themselves by them,—seek their destruction with the greatest eagerness. When

a hollow log has been found, which bears the marks of being used by them, the hunter waits with great impatience till the first dark, cloudy day of rain. A dark drizzle is the best, as it is well known that on such days they do not leave their lodgings at all.

The planter, concealing himself just before day-break carefully out of view, but directly in front of the opening of the log, awaits in patient silence the coming of sufficient light. Soon as the day opens, peering cautiously through the cane he can perceive the protruded snout and sharp watchful eyes of the sentinel peccary on duty, while his fellows behind him sleep. Noiselessly the unerring rifle is raised, the ring of its explosion is heard, and with a convulsive spring the sentinel leaps forward out of the hole, and rolls in its death struggle on the ground. Scarcely an instant is passed, a low grunt is heard, and another pair of eyes is seen shining steadily in the place the others had just held. Not a sound is heard, the planter loads again with such dexterity that not even a branch of the embowering cane is stirred. Again, with steady nerve, the piece is fired, out springs the second victim, as the first had done; then another takes its place, and so on to the third, fourth, fifth, or twentieth, even to the last of the herd; unless he should happen, by some carelessness, to make a stir in the cane around him, when out it springs, with a short grunt, without waiting to be shot this time, and followed by the whole herd, when they make a dash straight at the unlucky sportsman, who is now glad enough to take to his heels, and blesses his stars if he should be able to climb a tree or a fence, in time to save his legs. If, during the firing, the sentinel should happen to sink in the hole without making the usual spring, the one behind him roots out the body to take its place. They do not understand what the

danger is, or whence it comes. Neither do they fear it, but face its mysterious power dauntlessly to the last. They never charge towards unseen enemies, until guided either by the sight of some disturbance caused by a motion in the thicket, or by those sounds, with which they are familiar, indicating their position. Incredible as this account may appear, it is actually the method in which the settlements along Caney Creek and on the Brazos Bottoms have been, of late years, in a great measure relieved of this dangerous annoyance. When one is taken in a snare or trap, it is torn to pieces by the others in their eagerness to get it free. The planters amuse themselves very much by relating these adventures, as there are many mirth-provoking scrapes connected with them.

My first adventure with the peccaries I shall never forget. I was stopping with a planter on Caney Creek for a few days of rest and recreation. He was an old friend from my native State, had been one of the early emigrants to Texas, and was now settled with his brothers on a magnificent plantation, of which their joint enterprise had made them possessors. I was yet comparatively a new-comer, young, eager, and withal the tragic incidents of my late initiation to such life, an enthusiastic sportsman. Of course, I listened curiously to their many relations of adventures in the chase, which always form the chief topic of the social intercourse of the border. It happened that the peccaries had lately been doing much mischief to their crops of grain, and as they had been hunting them with great zeal and wrath, they formed the principal theme of denunciation and narrative. Their invective became quite amusing as they took me out to show me several of their finest dogs, which had been disabled by the shocking mutilation received in accidental meetings

with this fierce little animal. I say accidental, because no dog could be found hardy enough to hunt it, after having had one taste of its quality. The eldest brother told me of a meeting with them the day before. He had walked out with his rifle into a field of grain, on the border of the plantation, to look for fresh traces of the bear, which, together with the peccary, had almost utterly destroyed his corn. Here, by way of parenthesis, he exclaimed, "And I did find the tracts of a whopping old *he*!"

"Let us go hunting him then, this morning!" we all exclaimed in a breath.

"Well, well, we'll see."

When near the outside fence, he suddenly came upon a drove of peccaries in the very act of demolishment. It was too late to retreat decorously, for he had already been seen, and, as is usual, they came charging headlong upon him, grunting and snapping their white tusks at every jump. It was useless to stop to shoot; taking to his heels was his only chance. He made for the fence, which he succeeded in climbing before they reached him. The foremost of them reared themselves on their hind legs, endeavouring to reach him, cutting at his feet with their sharp tusks most viciously. It was a loose worm fence, and not very high, and they kept him there for a few moments, dancing, to use his own expression, "like a hen upon a hot griddle," while he fired as rapidly as he could load. He had killed several, without any diminution of their ferocity. It rather indeed seemed to be increased, if possible, when suddenly, to his unutterable consternation, the frail fence broke down, and he measured his length backward, in the cane outside. He sprang to his feet, as you may imagine, with some celerity, and, before they could reach him, had fairly vacated over the ruins of the

fence. After a hearty laugh at this ridiculous misadventure, the preparations for the bear hunt immediately commenced.

We were soon mounted and under weigh. These four of us, were attended by a negro "driver" on horse-back, who with his long cow's-horn swung about his neck, was to "put out" the pack. The dogs were a fine and powerful breed, used exclusively for bear hunting, and came of a cross of the bull-dog on the fox-hound—they were all scarred with the tusks of the peccary and the claws of the bear. On our way across the plantation, my friend was particular in counselling me how to behave in the event of any unpleasant rencontre with the peccaries—for he assured me flight was my only alternative, unless I desired to have my horse ham-strung, or every leg hopelessly gashed. I promised to be very prudent, of course, but with the opening yell of our dogs, all recollection of the existence of such creatures as peccaries vanished.

There was a nobler quarry on foot, and we plunged our horses eagerly into the narrow tracks opening into the cane-brake in the direction of the chase. We soon found ourselves riding beneath the matted arches formed by the meeting of the cane-tops, bound together by vines, ten or twelve feet above our heads. The cane on either side formed a wall so close, and seemingly so impregnable, that it seemed to me that a starved lizard would have found difficulty in making its way between the stems. So long as we could remain in the paths, of which there were but few, it was all very nice and exciting to listen to the fitful music of the chase; but when it came bursting on us with a roar of fitful yells, that made our horses shiver with eagerness, and we scattered each man for himself, trusting to his own ear, to enable him to intercept the chase, and win the honour of the

first shot, then the rough and fierce realities of a bear hunt began to be realized. My fiery horse plunged into the thickest of the brake, requiring my whole strength to keep him within anything like bounds. Now the bear had commenced circling in short turns through the tallest and most dense of the canes; and very soon, when the thundering chase went crashing past me, utterly invisible, though within fifty paces, my horse became entirely unmanageable, and in three or four furious bounds, I was torn from the saddle by the interlacing vines, through which he was endeavouring to burst his way. I held on to the reins, and recovered my seat, without stopping to count bruises; but the shock of the fall had brought me to my memory. I now did what I should have done at first, had I retained my self-possession, drew my heavy bowie knife, and commenced cutting through the brake. Ho! the chase has made another tack; and followed by the yells of my half-crazy comrades, the wild route turns crashing and roaring towards me again. This time my horse was even worse than before. At the first plunge he again became entangled in the vines, and whirling round and round in his furious efforts to release himself, I soon had the satisfaction of finding myself and horse twisted up in a net that would have defied the strength of Samson to have burst. The pleasure of this predicament was not a little increased by the sight of the bear rushing past at a few feet distance, with the whole pack biting at his heels.

Alas for my prowess! in what a helpless case was I! The moment my horse saw the bear, he uttered a wild neigh—it was the first one he had ever faced—and backed with such ungovernable terror and strength that I was almost torn to pieces by the vines, and choked in the bargain. However, at the expense of my coat sleeve, which was torn out of the arm-hole, my bleeding

right arm was freed from the infernal mesh, when a few desperate strokes of my bowie knife freed us from our desperate thralldom. Now came, from near at hand, the deafening clamour of baying, of shrieks, and hoarse growling, which told that the bear had stopped to fight the dogs. Now is the chance for the coveted shot, and it required no spur to urge my horse in that direction. I commenced hewing my way towards the scene, which seemed to be at the foot of a large tree. I heard the shouts of my friends, who seemed to be urging their way towards the same point. At about the same moment two of us burst our way through the wall of cane into the open space, about twenty feet in circumference, that had been beaten down by the weight of the enormous bear, during the battle. And such a scene as it was! The bear, hearing our approach, had made an attempt to climb the tree, and the dogs, encouraged by the same sounds, had made a simultaneous rush, and were literally all over his huge carcass, having hold of him on every side; our guns were instantly presented, but we feared to fire lest we should kill the dogs.

While we stood thus hesitating, and the bear was tossing the poor dogs like shuttlecocks to the right and left, quicker than thought, a troop of grunting peccaries came rushing in, and charged headlong upon bear, dogs, and all. Such yells, and screams, and roars of pain, and such a medley helter-skelter rout as now occurred, would be difficult to describe. The wounded dogs, with tails between their legs, came skulking towards us. The bear, frantic with pain, rolled his great carcass to an fro, and gaped his red mouth, as he struck blindly about him here and there. The grunting and rushing patter of an addition to the herd coming in behind us, waked us from the sort of stupor this unexpected scene had thrown us into for the instant. "Run, run!" shouted

my friend, with a voice half choked with mingled rage and laughter, and such a scurrying on all sides, for the other hunters had just come in, and the cry of "Peccaries! Peccaries! run! run!" and the popping of our guns all round at them, as we urged our horses to escape through the cane, closed this eventful scene of my first introduction to the peccaries.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BUFFALO.

Stirring nature of a Buffalo hunt—Characteristics of the Buffalo—Position of its eye, and results of this—Formidable character of the animal—Hunting the Buffalo, its perils and pleasures.

BUT the wildest scenes to be witnessed on this hemisphere are those connected with buffalo-hunting on the great plains. This huge and shaggy brute affords a great contrast in size with the fierce and bristling little peccary, though in many respects the formidable character of the two may be traced to a single and similar cause. The "downward eye," common to them, is this cause. Neither of them, from the stiff and peculiar structure of the neck and placing of the eye-balls, can without an effort, see beyond the direct plane of vision presented to the habitual carriage of the head.

Whatever is thus exhibited to the peccary, that has motion, if it be merely the legs of an animal, it charges upon, as we have seen; while the buffalo, which is less spontaneously pugnacious, may regard the same as an object of stupid suspicion, or of headlong, blundering terror. The buffalo must be wounded to turn upon the pursuer, and then the charge of the goaded and frantic monster, being always in a straight line, is disarmed of half its dangerous character, as the hunter is thus readily enabled to elude the effects by a quick side motion.

The eye of the horse being more prominently placed,

it is enabled soon to acquire this facility of advantage; and it is most surprising with what wary confidence the trained steeds of a Black-feet, Sioux, or a Comanche will dash in and through an interminable herd of these prodigious beasts, winding in and winding out, amidst the surging tumult of horns and heels, without receiving a scratch.

On no other conditions could this powerful animal be assailed with sufficient effect to answer the requisitions of the numerous tribes upon it for their yearly subsistence. Were they able only to assail the outskirts of the herds, the foraging they might do would be meagerly enough eked out upon the weakly bodies of the sick and wounded superannuated lingerers.

Indeed, were the buffalo possessed of the same alert, high-headed and agile motions of the mustang, in addition to the "bovine rage" with which it seems so easily inspired, the weight of the fore-parts of its body, and of the closely-packed, incalculable columns in which it moves, of choice, would make it the most formidable brute on earth, and enable it to trample the mightiest armies of men like grass in its path. There is no object in nature so terrible, as the headlong advance of a great herd of these animals thoroughly aroused by terror. Niagara itself is not more tremendously resistless, than that black, bellowing torrent, which is thus sometimes poured through narrow defiles of Rocky Mountain steppes, or which is suddenly turned loose like a new roaring flood, to overwhelm the slant and trembling plains.

No sights equalling this, are witnessed elsewhere on the face of the earth, though South Africa exhibits an approximating parallel in the migratory movements of the Springbock and other antelopes, to which we shall refer. A herd of elephant bulls may be, and is properly,

esteemed "pro-di-gi-ous," by English adventurers in that direction, but the oceanic masses in which the native bison of our plains are accustomed to move, have no real parallel, except those in which our people urge and act towards a given point of empire!

When we come to think, that at a rough estimate, more than seventy thousand souls of our native tribes upon the plains depend, the year round, solely upon the slaughter of buffalo, for food, covering, and in a great measure implements, and then put this together, with the consideration, that probably not more than one out of twenty of the animals slain is consumed, beyond the mere hide or hump, by these thriftless and wasteful people, some estimate may be formed of the aggregate increase, necessary to keep up a supply for the demand in this one quarter.

The inroads of our own race upon them, though great, are as yet comparatively insignificant. We are merely guided by the utilities, and have slaughtered them rather as objects of necessary food, than of commercial interchange and profit. The wealth and dignity of the Indian warrior, on the other hand, is nearly proportioned to the number of buffalo robes he can afford to dispose of to the traders, and therefore this article is to him the representative of value. Hence he follows upon the track of the migratory herd, and when undisturbed, continues to slay them with the sole and improvident reference to the value of the skins, at the nearest trading post; while the object of food, amidst its reeking abundance, is merely an incidental one. As it may chance, he merely cuts out some tit-bit from the individual skin, or leaves it, after stripping the skin, to the wolves, who follow faithfully in the wake of their purveyor.

The extent to which this reckless massacre is, and

has been habitually carried by the prairie Indians, can hardly be computed; yet we have the strange and significant fact, that they have among them no tradition even of an appreciable diminution in the numbers of the buffalo, thus wantonly slaughtered by them from remotest periods, which antedate the first appearance of the white man upon their plains, with his sulphurous and panic-spreading engines of destruction. From this ominous event, the tribes date those fatal refluxes in the stated periods and courses of migration of the herds, which have been attended by most disastrous famines among their people. Before this hated coming, they and their fathers had been accustomed to calculate, with the same certainty with which the sailor does the ebb and flow of ocean tides, these annual migrations, and could move with, or follow them with leisure and with confidence; but suddenly the mighty herds have snuffed some hidden danger on the tainted breeze, and breaking away in mad and scattered career over the plains, have defied pursuit, to gather again in some remote and unaccustomed pastures, beyond the reach of this vague, indefinite dread, which has met them on the coming air.

Thus, all calculations for the usual supply of the season having been thrown entirely out, the tribes are left to struggle with the precarious chances of again finding the buffalo. They, too, have been accustomed heretofore, to watching the signs of the seasons, and could even scent a drought as far as the grayest muzzle of the leaders of these herds, and could, with unfailing sagacity, foresee what variation from the usual trail this would cause with them. But now a new sign was in the heavens, a prognostic of evil, which, as it could only be felt in dread by their savage souls, was now first more nearly interpreted by the sure instincts of their

brute co-occupants of these great solitudes, and in these wild panics, distant, so unaccountable to them at first, they soon learned to recognise a mysterious apprehension of the remote advance of that destroying power, the realization of which has now, though later, come to them more clearly. The brute sense proved surer than the man's in this, as in all other instances in which circumstances have enabled us to measure its actions, and their results in regard to the approaches of our race into the wildernesses of earth with the fearful appliances of civilization.

Of all the modes of hunting the buffalo, practised by the prairie tribes, there is no one, the accompaniments of which are of such characteristic and terrible wildness, as that of driving a maddened herd of buffalo over the edges of one of those tremendous prairie rifts or *canones*, as they are sometimes incorrectly called by the border men. They are vast yawning fissures, which suddenly open on the great *Plano Estacado*, which stretches in one prodigious plain from the foot of the Rocky Mountains, to the head waters of the Red River, Arkansas, etc. Mr. Kendall's description of one of these spots in his Santa Fé Expedition, is so nearly accurate, that I give it here in his own words.

"We had scarcely proceeded six miles, after drying our blankets, when we suddenly came upon another immense rent or chasm in the earth, exceeding in depth, the one we had so much difficulty in crossing the day before. No one was aware of its existence, until we were immediately upon its brink, when a spectacle, exceeding in grandeur anything we had previously beheld, came suddenly in view. Not a tree or bush, no outline whatever, marked its position or course, and we were all lost in amazement, as one by one we left the double-file ranks, and rode up to the verge of the yawning abyss.

“In depth it could not be less than eight hundred feet, was from three to five hundred yards in width, and at the point where we first struck it, the sides were nearly perpendicular. A sickly sensation of dizziness was felt by all as we looked down, as it were, into the depths of the earth. In the dark and narrow valley below, an occasional spot of green relieved the eye, and a small stream of water, now rising to the view, then sinking beneath some huge rock, was foaming and bubbling along. Immense walls, columns, and in some places what appeared to be arches, were seen standing, modeled by the wear of the water, undoubtedly, yet so perfect in form that we could with difficulty be brought to believe that the hand of man had not fashioned them. The rains of centuries, falling upon an immense prairie, had here formed a reservoir, and their workings upon the different veins of earth and stone had formed these strange and fanciful shapes.

“Before reaching the chasm we had crossed numerous large trails, leading a little more to the west than we were travelling; and the experience of the previous day had led us to suppose that they all terminated at a common crossing near by. In this conjecture we were not disappointed, for a trot of half an hour brought us into a large road, the thoroughfare along which millions of Indians, buffaloes, and mustangs, had evidently travelled for years. Perilous as the descent appeared, we well knew that there was no other near. The leading mule was again urged forward, the steadier and older horses were next driven over the sides, and the more skittish and intractable brought up the rear. Once in the narrow path, which led circuitously down the descent, there was no turning back, and our half-maddened animals finally reached the bottom in safety. Several large stones were loosened from their

fastenings by our men, during this frightful descent; these would leap, dash, and thunder down the precipitous sides, and strike against the bottom far below us with a terrific and reverberating crash.

"We found a running stream on reaching the lower level of the chasm, on the opposite side of which was a romantic dell, covered with short grass and a few scattered cotton-woods. A large party of Indians had encamped on this very spot but a few days previous, the wilted limbs of the trees and other "signs," showing that they had made it a resting-place. We, too, halted a couple of hours to give our horses an opportunity to graze and rest themselves. The trail, which led up on the opposite side, was discovered a short distance above us, to the south, winding up the steep and rugged sides of the acclivity.

"As we journeyed along this dell, all were again struck with admiration at the strange and fanciful figures made by the washing of the waters during the rainy season. In some places perfect walls, formed of reddish clay, were seen standing, and were they anywhere else, it would be impossible to believe that other than the hand of man formed them. The veins of which these walls were composed were of even thickness, very hard, and ran perpendicularly; and when the softer sand which had surrounded them was washed away, the veins still remained standing upright, in some places a hundred feet high, and three or four hundred in length. Columns, too, were there, and such was their appearance or architectural order, and so much of chaste grandeur was there about them, that we were lost in wonder and admiration. Sometimes the breastworks, as of forts, would be plainly visible; then, again, the frowning turrets of some castle of the olden time. Cumbersome pillars of some mighty pile, such as is dedicated to reli-

gion or royalty, were scattered about; regularity was strangely mingled with disorder and ruin, and Nature had done it all. Niagara has been considered one of her wildest freaks, but Niagara sinks into insignificance when compared with the wild grandeur of this awful chasm—this deep, abyssmal solitude, as Carlyle would call it. Imagination carried us back to Thebes, to Palmyra, and to ancient Athens, and we could not help thinking that we were now among their ruins.

“Our passage out of this place was effected with the greatest difficulty. We were obliged to carry our rifles, holsters, and saddle bags in our hands; and in clambering up a steep pitch, one of the horses, striking his shoulders against a projecting rock, was precipitated some fifteen or twenty feet directly upon his back. All thought he must be killed by the fall; but, strangely enough, he rose immediately, shook himself, and a second effort in climbing proved more successful—the animal had not received the slightest injury!

“By the middle of the afternoon we were all safely across, after passing some five or six hours completely shut out from the world. Again we found ourselves upon the level prairie, and in looking back, after proceeding some hundred yards, not a sign of the immense chasm was visible. The plain we were then upon was at least one hundred and fifty miles in width, and the two chasms I have mentioned were the reservoirs of the heavy body of rain which falls during the wet season, and at the same time its conductors to the running streams. The prairie is undoubtedly the largest in the world, and the *canones* are in perfect keeping with the size of the prairie. Whether the waters which run into them sink into them, or find their way to the Canadian, is a matter of uncertainty—but I am inclined to believe the latter is the case.”

This description is accurate as the language is striking—no language, indeed, can fully convey the sudden appal with which this gaping waste of piled and torn immensity fills one coming upon it for the first time. It forms a stern and most characteristic feature of these dreary steppes, that climb through thousands of miles by imperceptible slopes towards the white soaring crests of the Rocky Mountain chain.

The buffalo trails leading from every conceivable direction to centre at the far-separated crossing places, are, most probably, as old as the face of the continent, and are frequently themselves worn into deep impracticable gullies, as you approach the point of convergence, by the tramp of myriad hoofs through unrecorded centuries.

Nothing more strongly indicates the fatuitous recklessness of the Indian tribes, whose sole dependence is upon this animal, than the constant recurrence of such wanton and wholesale massacres as that of which we have spoken. Although the buffalo, for causes at which I have hinted, are yearly becoming less accessible to them—whether their numbers be so appreciably diminished in reality or not, yet they persist, as of old, whenever they can come upon a herd, however immense, feeding in such relative position to one of these rifts as to offer the inducement of possible success, in urging the panic-stricken masses over the sudden abyss, where, bounding from rough point to point—down! down!—their great bodies are piled in a huge hetacomb of blackened, sweltering slaughter, such as could rejoice only these Red Demons of destruction.

Next to this, in wholesale wantonness, among the methods of hunting buffalo peculiar to their Indian foes, is the "Prairie Surround." The widely scattered line of the Surround, enclosing some valley containing a

herd, is rapidly closed up by the yelling warriors composing it, who drive the frightened animals from its circumference, urging towards a centre, where, precipitated in the headlong crush upon each other, the helpless mass sways, bellowing—while amidst the dust-clouds of their collision, the forms of the warriors, who have leaped from their horses upon the backs of the buffalo, may be dimly seen treading the horned tumult with fierce gestures, and wielding the long lance as a rope dancer does his balance pole, with the slight difference, that with nearly every step they thrust its sharp point down through joint and marrow, between the spine and skull of some new victim, whose shaggy back they have but pressed in passing with their moccasined feet. Thousands are thus slaughtered in a few moments.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DARKIE FIDDLER AND THE WOLVES.

Characteristics of the Wolf—Its prevalence in South Kentucky—Dick, the Darkie Fiddler—His punctiliousness—Going to a Wedding—Disagreeable companions — Music's charms — Fiddling away the Wolves.

THE wolf, besides being the most ubiquitous of our predatory animals, is the most active, tenacious, and difficult of extirpation. It is everywhere. It fills in the chinks of desolation. Its savage, grinning head peers through all the broken glooms of our stern wildernesses—a ghoul-like presence—hideous, gaunt, and fierce! It knows no sympathies, and we give it none. Yet there is one droll incident with which my boyhood was familiar, which seems to indicate a certain susceptibility to the softer emotions—or more refined senses—at least.

In the early days of the settlement of South Kentucky, there was great trouble with the wolves. The large gray wolf of the more wooded northern and middle districts, greatly abounded in the heavy forests of the Green River Bottom, particularly in the neighbourhood of Henderson, which is situated on the Ohio, not far below the mouth of Green River. The barn-yard suffered to a great extent, in the way of pigs, calves, etc., from their depredations, which frequently, in mid-winter, were even carried to the audacious extreme of

attacking human beings. Indeed, it was no unusual thing for the belated footman, at such times, when they were pressed by hunger, to find himself surrounded by a herd of them in the woods. Some striking stories of hair-breadth escapes and desperate ventures, belong to this period and condition of things. No one of them ever made a stronger impression upon me than the adventure of old Dick, the fiddler.

He was "a good old good-for-nothing darkie," as the word went in the neighbourhood, whose sole merit consisted in his fiddling—but, by the way!—singular as this merit was—it in reality constituted him by far the most important gentleman of colour within forty miles around. The fact is, nothing of any interest could occur without his presence. It was as important—skinny as it was—as the very face of the man in the moon—beneath whose auspices the corn-shockings, the weddings, the "break-downs," and Juba dances of the neighbourhood were enacted.

Old Dick, who was the property of one of the Hendersons, from whom the town and county take their names, was esteemed by his good-natured and wealthy master as decidedly a privileged character. He had his time pretty much to himself, and no one pretended to interfere with its disposal, as his master humorously styled him a "necessary nuisance" to the neighbourhood, because he kept the darkies in good humour by his fiddle. Now Dick had most strongly developed the strongest and most marked traits of the fiddler, the world over, namely, punctiliousness and punctuality. Upon either of these points he was peculiarly irritable, nay even ferocious. With all the proverbial timidity of the "child of genius," Old Dick was yet as savage as a hyena at any improprieties of etiquette which might chance to turn up during the sable orgies over which

he presided; but nothing caused him to so far forget "*the proprieties*" in his own person, as the intervention of any unusual or accidental causes of delay which prevented his being *on hand* in time. Poor Dick!—but the story I have to tell of him will explain.

On the occasion of a grand wedding festival among the coloured gentry of the neighbouring plantation, some six miles distant, Old Dick was, of course, expected to officiate as master of the ceremonies. It had been an unusually severe winter, and a heavy snow lay upon the ground on the eventful evening, when, having donned his "long-tailed blue," with its glittering gilt buttons, and mounted the immense shirt collar, by the aid of which the dignity of his official character was properly maintained, the ancient Apollo sallied forth, fiddle in hand, to dare the perils of the distant way alone: for the younger darkies had all gone to the frolic hours ago, with a haste and eagerness altogether unbecoming his importance.

The moon was out, and the stars twinkled merrily over head, as the spry old man trudged away over the crisp and crackling snow. The path, which was a very narrow one, led, for the greater part of the way, through the dark shadows of a heavy bottom forest, which yet remained as wild as when the Indians roamed it, and was untraversed by a waggon road for many miles.

The profound and dreary solitude of the way could not have failed to impress any one who was not either more or less than human, except under conditions of entire pre-occupation in one absorbing thought, such as now held absolutely the body and soul of the old man, in the strained tension of an anxious hurry to reach the seat of operations, in exact time. He was goaded at every step by the maddening vision of the expectant ranks of sable gentility, rolling the whites of their eyes

and stamping their stocking feet upon the puncheon floor, impatient of his delay; for the truth was, that he had lingered a little too long over the polishing of those brass buttons and the settling of that plentitude of collar, and he now first became conscious of it as he had come forth beneath the moon and perceived its unexpected height above the horizon.

On he dashed with unrelaxing energy, heedless of the black shadows and hideous night-cries in the deep forest. Wolves were howling around him in every direction, but he paid no attention to sounds that were so common. However, he was soon compelled to give more heed to these animals than was by any means pleasing or expected. He had now made nearly half of his journey, and the light opening ahead through the trees showed him the "old clearing," as it was called, through which his path led. The wolves had been getting excessively noisy for the last mile; and to the undescrivable horror of the old man, he could hear them gathering about him in the crackling bushes on either side, as they ran along to keep pace with his rapid steps. The woods very soon seemed to the old man to be literally alive with them, as they gathered in yellow packs from far and near.

Wolves are cautious about attacking a human being at once, but usually require some little time to work themselves up to the point. That such was the case now proved most lucky for poor old Dick, who began to realize the horrible danger, as a dark object would brush past his legs every few moments, with a snapping sound like the ring of a steel trap; while the yells and patter of the gathering wolves increased with terrible rapidity. Dick knew enough of the habits of the animal to be fully aware that to run would insure his instant death, as the cowardly pack would be sure to set upon him in

a body on the instant of observing any such indication of fear. His only chance was to keep them at bay by preserving the utmost steadiness until he could reach the open ground before him, when he hoped they might leave him, as they do not like to attack in such places. He remembered, too, that an old hut still stood in the middle of the clearing, and the thought that he might reach that haven gave him some comfort.

The wolves were becoming more audacious every minute, and the poor old soul could see their green eyes glaring fiery death upon him from all the thickets around. They rushed at him more boldly one after another, snapping as they went past in closer and closer proximity to his thin legs—indeed, the frightened fiddler instinctively thrust at them with his fiddle to turn them aside. In doing so the strings were jarred, and the despairing wretch took on some hope to his shivering soul, when he observed the suddenness of the sound caused the wolves to leap aside with surprise. He instantly drew his hand across the strings with vehemence, and to his infinite relief they sprang back and aside as if he had shot amongst them. Taking immediate advantage of this lucky diversion in his favour, as he had now reached the edge of the clearing, he made a break for the hut, raking his hand across the fiddle strings at every jump, until they fairly roared again. The astonished wolves paused for a moment on the edge of the clearing with tails between their legs, looking after him; but the sight of his flying form renewed at once their savage instincts, and with a loud burst of yells, they pursued him at full speed. Alas for the unlucky fiddler; had he been caught now, it would have been all up with him, even had his fiddle continued to shriek more unearthly shrieks than that of Paganini ever gave forth. He had broken the spell by running,

for had they caught him now, they would never have paused to listen, had he been an Orpheus in reality.

Luckily the old man reached the hut just as they were at his heels, and slamming the rickety door behind him, he had time to climb out on the roof, where he was comparatively out of danger. I say comparatively, for the perch he now occupied was too rickety to make it anything rather than desirable, except by contrast with the immediate condition from which he had escaped.

The wolves were now furious, and, thronging the interior, leaped at him with wild yells of gnashing rage. The poor old sinner was horribly frightened, and it required the utmost activity of motion to keep his legs from being snapped by them. Wild with the agonized terror as he was, poor old Dick had managed to cling to his fiddle through it all, and remembering that it had saved him in the woods, he now, with the sheer energy of desperation, drew his bow shrieking across the strings, with a sound that rose high above all their deafening yells, while, with his feet kicking out into the air, he endeavoured to avoid their steel-like fangs. An instant silence followed this sudden outburst, and Dick continued to produce such frightful spasms of sound as his hysterical condition conceived.

This outbreak kept the wolves quiet for a moment or two, but Old Dick soon learned to his increased horror that even wolves are too fastidious to stand bad fiddling, for they commenced a renewal of the attack, as soon as the first surprise was over, more furiously than ever. This was too much for the poor fiddler, and most especially when the head of a great wolf was thrust up between the boards of the roof, within a few inches of where he sat. He gave himself up now for a gone darkie, and with the horrified exclamation—"Bress God! who dar?" he fell to fiddling "Yankee

Doodle" with all his might, unconsciously, as the dying swan is said to sing its own requiem in its closing moments. With the first notes of the air silence commenced; Orpheus had conquered! the brutes owned the subduing spell, and the terror-stricken fiddler, when he came to himself—astonished at the sudden cessation of hostilities—saw he was surrounded by the most attentive and certainly appreciative audience he had ever played before—for the moment there was the slightest cessation of the music, every listener sprang forward to renew the battle, and set his pipe-stem legs to flying about in the air again.

But he had now learned the spell, and so long as he continued to play with tolerable correctness, was comparatively safe. The old fiddler soon forgot his terror now in professional pride, for he was decidedly flattered by such intense appreciation; and entering fully into the spirit of the thing, played with a gusto and effect such as he thought he had never before surpassed or even equalled. Even the wedding, with its warm lights, its sweetened whisky, was forgotten for the time in the glow of this new professional triumph.

But all pleasures have their draw-backs on this earth; and as time progressed, he began, with all his enthusiasm, to feel very natural symptoms of cold, fatigue, and even exhaustion. But it would not do—he could not stop a moment before they were at him again—and there they persistently sat, that shaggy troupe of connoisseurs, fidgeting on their haunches, with lolling tongues and pricked ears, listening to their compulsory charmer, for several weary hours, until the negroes at the wedding, becoming impatient or alarmed about the old man, came out to look for him, and found him thus perched upon the roof of the tottering hut, sawing away for dear life, while he was ready to drop

every instant from sheer fatigue and the freezing cold. They rescued the old man from his comfortless position, while the lingering forms of his late audience told that they most unwillingly surrendered the fruition of their unwonted feast.

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